Marks of

Companies look for ways to maximize—or escape—their identities.

By Tony Spaeth

For my seventeenth annual review in these pages of noteworthy corporate rebrandings, here are seventeen more stories. For the most part, they are stories of leadership, and they include work by both CEOs and designers that's truly great—both strategically effective and creatively excellent.

Past articles have arranged these stories according to their primary purpose—whether to effect structural change (merger or spin-out), advance a strategic intention, or fix a functional problem (such as a weak name or logo). But the truth is that almost always, in a given rebranding, there is a mix of two or of all three of these purposes; furthermore, the company usually acknowledges the driving purposes in press releases, launch speeches, announcement ads, or personal interviews. And not only can we identify those purposes—we can with reasonable confidence quantify their relative importance. So for each of this year's cases, I have added estimated weightings of the relative importance of structural change, strategic intentions, and improved functionality. For more information, see "What Is the Matrix?" on page 39.

The world's new leading steel company was formed in June 2006, when family-controlled Mittal Steel acquired Luxembourg-based Arcelor (itself the 2002 merger of Arbed, Aceralia, and Usinor) and created ArcelorMittal. FutureBrand won the identity-planning and design assignment.

A year later, as its new logo was launched, the company breathlessly proclaimed—in a statement accompanying a six-minute promotional video—"The day has finally come, the mystery has been revealed—the fruit of months of intensive work was presented to a thrilled public, arousing standing ovations: The new ArcelorMittal brand has come to life!"

In the wake of a contentious acquisition process, CEO Lakshmi Mittal's strategic rebranding intent was to honor the Arcelor heritage and minimize the impression of an Indian takeover—yet to begin a process of cultural unification. The new ArcelorMittal even retained Arcelor's European HQ location as its own, in large part to underscore the new company's global positioning.

The "merger of equals" name decision is something of a compromise, effective in the short term to start the teambuilding but weaker over time in focus and unity. (In contrast, "Arcelor," a name just five years old, was a braver naming decision.) The new red symbol, however, successfully adds vitality; if you squint sideways, it is a monogram A, or even an M, but it can also be read as a ribbon of hot steel. It is a refreshingly direct design solution. (50% structural, 50% strategic, 0% functional)

Brocade has quietly become an IT powerhouse in the management, networking, and storage of enterprise data. (Basically, the company makes switches, routers, data directors, and the software that drives them.) It has grown organically and by acquisition, most recently of competitor McData, and it now claims the position of "the leading provider of networked storage solutions."

Brocade's awareness and reputation, however, has lagged well behind its present stature, and this was becoming a serious barrier to further growth. And its "B-weave" symbol too specifi-

Leadership

cally underscored Brocade's association with "fabric switch" products, while CEO Michael Klayko's new goal was diversification, from SAN (storage area networks) to enterprisewide solutions. "We were changing and growing beyond our traditional boundaries," said worldwide marketing VP Tom Buiocchi. "To provide a new platform for the future, we needed a complete overhaul of the old brand."

Landor's consultants responded comprehensively, starting with a brand platform expressed in the mantra "challenge with intent," intended to recharge Brocade's internal culture. There were also changes in unit names and brand architecture, to help speed the integration of past and future acquisitions. But the drama is in the striking new "B-wing" symbol and a red-driven visual system. And if a flying B reminds you of a Bentley, how could that hurt? (20% structural, 60% strategic, 20% functional)

Here's another B, not yet flying but about to take off. Remember Sabena? The airline went bankrupt right after Sept. 11, 2001, and its regional subsidiary Delta Air Transport became SN Brussels Airlines, which, a year ago, merged with Virgin Express to be rechristened Brussels Airlines, here designed by Hoet & Hoet of yes, Brussels.

I've added this B because I like it so much. Count the runway lights. Originally there were thirteen, but someone thought that might be unlucky; the Hoets graciously added another. Do you feel safer? (50% structural, 30% strategic, 20% functional)

The Stockholm-based Observer Group had a classic case of brand indigestion. It had acquired ten regional companies in "reputation tracking and media research" (e.g., PR clipping services) and retained their brand names, using a graphic arrow symbol to communicate their common ownership. President and CEO Niklas Flyborg realized that names mean more than symbols. Since his vision is to offer a seamless spectrum of counsel, as well as data, to multinational clients, this was clearly a counterproductive branding strategy. The Cision name has now replaced such media-services brands as Bacon's Information and

Delahaye in the United States, Bowdens and Verbatim in Canada, and Observer throughout Europe.

The stronger strategy regroups all businesses under a common name, with a uniform profile across all markets. Advised by Landor Associates, Flyborg chose the higher-reward path of new name creation, in preference to retention of the overly passive "Observer" brand. Landor created "Cision" and decorated it with three little arrows, flying in unison. In about three seconds, I got past my initial reaction, "This name sounds odd and looks incomplete," and got to, "I get it—*precision*," followed shortly by, "Oh—how appropriate!" (0% structural, 85% strategic, 15% functional)

When there's a spin-out—or, in this case, another conglomerate breakup—rebranding is essential. The only question, then, is whether to hang on to a heritage identity or start fresh—the choice faced by Tyco Healthcare president Rich Meelia. (For the other choice, see Tyco Electronics on page 40.)

In the wake of the Dennis Kozlowski scandal, Tyco's new management claimed that its strategy would focus less on growing through acquisitions and more on developing synergy among its existing businesses. Almost four years later, the spin-outs of Tyco Electronics and Tyco Healthcare (now Covidien) suggest that synergy can go only so far. Electronics and Healthcare make more sense as independent plays, leaving Tyco International to find greater synergy (or further spin-outs) among its remaining safety-, fire-, and industrial-equipment brands.

As a name, though, "Tyco Healthcare" lacked appeal, and none of its brands (such as Mallinckrodt and Kendall) offered an umbrella big enough for all. So Interbrand consultants recommended a coined, nonlimiting name. "Covidien" won, being the least risky legally, functionally distinctive, easiest to swallow, and arguably relevant.

Interbrand's designers offered the option of—and Meelia chose—a dominant symbol (rather than a freestanding wordmark), and provided a four-toned block shape with a cross in it. To some, this evokes crossed Band-Aids. Interbrand's intention: It's a plus sign, meant to evoke "the confluence of compassion and collaboration." You decide. To me, the symbol is excess baggage that sucks the air out of a name perfectly able to stand on its own. Sometimes consultants shouldn't let their clients make the final call. (70% structural, 30% strategic, 0% functional)

In Daimler, we have a name well able to stand on its own. Last August, DaimlerChrysler sold control of Chrysler to investors, and rather than reverting to its storied pre-1998 name, "Daimler-Benz," it announced its intention to revert to simply Daimler.

CEO Dieter Zetsche's strategic decision eliminates the confusing problems faced by companies such as Ford (and, for that matter, the new Chrysler LLC) whose names are both corporate and category brands. We are sometimes uncertain which brand is speaking, and too often the speaker is confused as well. Daimler gets this: "The guiding principle of the name change process is a clear distinction between the corporate brand Daimler and the Group's various product brands. The corporate brand Daimler will serve to identify the Group in its dealings with political decision-makers, the general public, the financial markets, the business media, and its employees. It will also serve as an umbrella for all of its product brands"—a list that now includes Mercedes-Benz, Maybach, Smart, Freightliner, Sterling, Western Star, Setra, Thomas Built Buses, Orion, and Mitsubishi Fuso.

To visually express this confident rebranding, the existing Daimler wordmark was subtly modified—no initial cap (smart move), slightly heavier let-

TONY SPAETH, a Rye, N.Y., corporate identity consultant, reports here each year on noteworthy identity programs. Additional views and reflections can be seen at www.identityworks.com.

terforms, and a deep blue in place of black—by the identity firm Schindler Parent. Its new logo asserts Daimler's stature with dignity and simplicity. (85% structural, 15% strategic, 0% functional)

Same name. Same symbol, really. All that has changed is quality, another word for which is design. It's probably the most visible rebranding of 2007 (at least where Delta flies), and a candidate for the year's best. In the event of a merger with either United or Northwest, Delta is now the more credible, more universal candidate for "survivor brand."

This is a classic instance of a rebranding that not merely signaled but actually consolidated a successful turnaround—for a while, at least. What better than to unveil new branding on the occasion of its official recovery from bankruptcy, which took place less than an hour before the closed-circuit unveiling of a newly painted Boeing 777.

Not far from that plane's new logo was a painted thank-you message from employees to then-CEO Gerald Grinstein, who in turn made it clear that those employees' sacrifices and stubborn determination had made possible Delta's survival, recovery, and the defeat of a hostile acquirer. Their reward includes a distribution of $480 million in cash and options, which helps put in perspective the reported $10 million cost of rebranding.

The design work (by Lippincott) was nothing short of brilliant in its simplicity. Nice ideas included going all red in the symbol (does a world citizen want to be quite so red, white, and blue as the old Delta?), adding life and dimension with a second tone of red, and pointing the delta forward on the tail display, creating a supergraphic advertising signature. And I like the clean confidence of all-caps letterforms, as much as I disliked the fat school-bookish letterforms they replace. Is there new hope for the Modern aesthetic? (0% structural, 100% strategic, 0% functional)

Experian is an information-services company whose core asset is consumer credit data. It was assembled from acquisitions (and named) by a U.K. company curiously named GUS, which in 2006 spun out Experian and another entity and then quietly disappeared. Today, from operating bases in the United Kingdom and California, Experian employs twelve thousand people in thirty-one countries, generating annual sales of over £1.5 billion.

Rebranding began when the company retained Enterprise IG (now The Brand Union) merely to "refresh" the existing logo, which management felt to be difficult to use, easy to overlook, and somewhat puzzling in its message. As CEO Don Robert talked with the designers, however, the strategic opportunity to express directional change, and a bigger vision, became far more important.

It's always great to see a CEO who suddenly gets it: "I can use this rebranding to lead this company." For Roberts, the driving ideas involved "cohering" a growing family of entities, partnering Experian's data with customer-generated data, and focusing multiple data points to form one actionable picture. These ideas led directly to the symbol design, in which "multiple points" form a focusing frame. (0% structural, 90% strategic, 10% functional)

We now arrive at a murky stratosphere in America's healthcare bureaucracy, where responsibility for quality control is vested. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations is a nonprofit dedicated to improving the quality and safety of care. According to brand consultant Anthony Bennett, "research showed that perceptions of the Joint Commission were lagging, and that while the nonprofit had made significant steps to improve itself and its processes over the years, healthcare professionals' view of them hadn't changed at all. Moreover, the scope of activities that the Joint Commission was involved in had moved beyond only accreditation-related activities."

Part of the problem was that each of its various units had developed its own logo; yes, brand anarchy happens in the nonprofit world too. (Unit

Logos should be designed for the ages but reviewed every decade or so.

pride will always fill a branding vacuum.) Working with Bennett and with Roger van den Bergh of design firm Onoma, president Dennis O'Leary decided to simplify the communicative name (while adding "The"), and to use a graphic symbol both to signal change and to clean up the brand architecture, linking the units graphically to the parent. Onoma designed a flight of four deltas, said to represent the W. Edwards Deming system of Plan-Do-Check-Act.

Functionally, this lively but sophisticated abstract symbol does a great job of pulling the units together, and adds the feeling of a driving purpose to their otherwise uninspiring names. If it were to "mean" anything, it would be more helpful if it conveyed "it's about health care"—a fact now missing from the name. (0% structural, 85% strategic, 15% functional)

Corporate logos should be designed for the ages but reviewed every decade or so, because goals and conditions change, and because in time even great designs can lose relevance and impact. The Johnson Controls wordmark with cascading O's was designed in 1974 to express transition from the mechanical to the computer age; at age 33, it felt tired—a drag, not a driver.

In January 2006, the Milwaukee-based company—a global giant offering batteries, automotive interiors, and building-efficiency products—was feeling misunderstood and underappreciated: coldly competent, where it sought to be open and approachable; boring, where it sought emotional resonance. Led by CEO John M. Barth, management retained Lippincott for a brand review. (Barth's successor, Stephen Roell, would later be responsible for implementing the new brand.)

Lippincott's planners established the brand basics, articulating a corporate brand platform that convened the company's disparate businesses in commonly understood functional and social purposes and in a shared positioning: "Johnson Controls, Inc. is a Fortune 100 global market leader in integrating technologies, products and services that redefine the relationships between people and their surroundings. By understanding the changes that affect how we live, work and travel, we help create smart environments that are more comfortable, efficient, safe, and sustainable."

Lippincott's designers then provided a logo, composed of a wordmark—one making "Johnson" the hero rather than "Controls"—and added a symbol (dubbed the "open globe") because they felt that ideas of openness and global reach, and a desired emotional impact, could not be achieved through type alone.

It's truly an in-depth program—thoroughly planned, soundly executed, and well communicated. The symbol (another fresh globe treatment—amazing how this can still be done!) achieves its goals of emotional expression, with suggestions of worldwide reach, commitment to environment, and a culture of openness. There's even a hint of a J and a C in it, a little double-take bonus. That's a lot of content for one little symbol. (0% structural, 90% strategic, 10% functional)

The next case is a change of name, from VNU Group to The Nielsen Co. This Netherlands-based "global information and media company" chose to adopt its best-known subsidiary's name as a master brand umbrella. Said chairman and CEO David Calhoun, "Nielsen is one of the great names in the information-services industry."

This was also the undoing of a 1998 name change, to initials. The company was formed in 1964 by the merger of two Dutch publishing companies and was named "Verenigde Nederlandse Uitgeversbedrijven," which translates to "United Dutch Publishing Companies." With global expansion and a changing business focus, the full name was limiting. So in 1998, the company took the easy way out with "VNU"—hardly a tower of brand strength.

Private-equity firms acquired VNU in 2006 and hired Calhoun, from GE, to run it. He cut jobs by 10 percent and sold its European business magazines—

keeping, for the time being, *Billboard* and *The Hollywood Reporter*, perhaps for their sex appeal. Calhoun also decided to consolidate a diversity of subsidiary brands, many of them "Nielsen" but with no visual commonality, and to work toward "truly integrated marketing and media services" under one brand. He retained Landor to plan and design the brand.

The name decision was a no-brainer. "VNU" was a poor choice to begin with, in effect a placeholder; "Nielsen" has a strong but flexible reputation. The logo design (quite frankly) could be stronger, if only by losing the pointlessly blue "n." (0% structural, 90% strategic, 10% functional)

In February 2007, a company that did not yet exist launched its brand at a booth at the 3GSM World Congress in Barcelona, and held its first press conference as Nokia Siemens Networks, the 50/50 spin-out of the network-infrastructure manufacturing and services businesses of the two parents. In the wake of Siemens' legal difficulties (having to do with alleged bribery), the actual closing was a bit delayed. But as of April 1, there was a new category giant (with estimated 2006 revenues of $22 billion), second to Ericsson but bigger than Alcatel-Lucent.

Moving Brands, a relatively new U.K. firm, won this competitive assignment. Naming was not up for review, but Moving Brands was able to persuade its new client not to merely combine the two partners' existing and very similar logos. The design brief, after all, was twofold: to exploit existing equities (and the name alone did that) and to express something new, which here had to be done visually. The core idea the consultants proposed, the guiding "brand narrative," would be that networks unite communities.

I'm not sure that the new "wave" device shows how "networks unite communities." But it does succeed in uniting and framing the Nokia and Siemens names, primarily by upstaging them. When a name is weak, the use of a dominating visual device is strategically appropriate.

And how is the name weak? At seven syllables it is too long yet misleading if shortened; it suggests and perpetuates a two-culture balancing act; it points more to its history than to its future; and it forever serves to remind customers, employees, and managers that two owners continue to control its destiny. (100% structural, 0% strategic, 0% functional)

When a nonprofit suffers from dysfunctional branding, it helps to have a board member qualified to say, "Let's fix this." For the Museum of Television & Radio, it was the legendary adman Ed Ney, who sponsored a brand review by his friends at Landor Associates.

"MT&R" was wrong in about every possible way, beginning with the decision to feature its initials as if they were a viable name. The full name was itself misleading and limiting—this is not a museum (with collections of stuff on display) and doesn't want to be one, and while it began with TV and radio, its purpose is broader: "a center that convenes media leaders and enthusiasts for programs that explore and illuminate the immense and growing impact of all media on our lives, culture and society."

When I heard that Landor was working on this, I wondered how the designers could solve the problem. The name solution is brilliant—when you can possibly use a real name, use it! They were lucky that MT&R was founded by William F. Paley, whose name is short, distinctive, and fondly

What Is the Matrix?

The Corporate Brand Matrix, available at www.CorporateBrandMatrix.com, is an online database of corporate branding history, developed in collaboration with branding consultant Tom Vanderbauwhede in Antwerp. It can be accessed to match purposes against tools used, or merely to see case histories comparable to your own company's situation. As of December 2007, the matrix-in-development contained data from sixty-one cases, identified either as estimated (by Matrix authors) or as confirmed by the rebranded corporation or its consultants.

Users can search cases at the confluence of a type of purpose, and a category of tools. Cases can also be searched by industry, or to see the work of individual consultant firms. As the case database grows, search parameters will become more specific as to purpose and tool. —T.S.

remembered. Given “Paley,” “Center for Media” conveys function and scope, and “The” is here justified for enabling the three-syllable communicative name “The Paley.”

The circular wordmark, in which the name is actually repeated, was inspired by the thought of a camera’s focusing lens. Note how weighting and placement help seat “The Paley” and associate it with “Media.” A clean and clever solution, stable yet dynamic. (0% structural, 50% strategic, 50% functional)

A brand does not need to be clearly “wrong,” as was MT&R, to benefit from rethinking and redesign. Board members of Princeton University Press merely thought that “our graphic identity needed some sprucing up.” Happily its new director, Peter Dougherty, found his way to Ivan Chermayeff and Tom Geismar, whose firm has as high a success ratio in great identity designs as any in the world. They helped “PUP” define itself as “a scholarly press with a public face, a traditional Ivy League press with a face towards the future, a print publisher with an electronic presence, an American company active globally, and a partner of Princeton University.”

Dougherty added in a *ForeWord* magazine essay that “we learned that . . . [p]roperly used, [a logo] becomes a leadership tool. . . . [I]t means vision, and vision—an idea in service of a goal—can be represented visually. . . . Chermayeff and Geismar attempted to capture this vision in the boldness and clarity of the graphics they incorporated in our logotype.”

The orange P symbol is indeed lively, clean, clear and clever too, in almost subliminally incorporating “PUP” in its composition. But the logo itself only begins to suggest the deeper impact of redesign (by masters) of this company’s visual presence, in all of its manifestations. (0% structural, 100% strategic, 0% functional)

Let’s review. In 2004, a reeling Tyco International shifted strategy from acquisition to consolidation, bundling one set of businesses as Tyco Healthcare, another as Tyco Electronics. In health care, Tyco spun out as Covidien. In contrast, Tom Lynch, as CEO of Tyco’s Electronics division, chose a naming path of lesser resistance (for the moment) by elevating the existing division name to corporate brand level. To do this, he had to license “Tyco” from the remaining Tyco International, accepting the risk of sharing brand control in the future with an unrelated company. Generally, shared names come to be regretted, but if Lynch is lucky, all other Tycos will in due course spin out or otherwise fade away.

Given the shared name, design of yet another Tyco wordmark would make no sense (and “Tyco Electronics” is long for a wordmark), so a symbol was warranted. Interbrand designed a lively TE monogram that neatly evokes connection, in a plug-in sense. With its restrained size, it works to strengthen the presence of the otherwise undistinctive name. (60% structural, 40% strategic, 0% functional)

In 1999, Unum and Provident, leaders in corporate-benefit disability insurance in the U.S. and U.K. markets (and a competitor to Aflac), merged to become UnumProvident. It was another name noteworthy for its awkwardness, and if the two cultures were uncomfortable with one another—as they were— it was guaranteed to prolong their mutual discomfort. To make matters worse, the name decision was wrapped in American stripes—not too smart for an enterprise with international growth aspirations.

Four years later, a new president and CEO, Tom Watjen, took charge and tackled such cultural problems as disunity, bloat, arrogance in the marketplace, poor pricing discipline, and a challenged benefit-delivery reputation. The company began pulling out of its slump, and in January 2007 Watjen proclaimed, “Given the progress we have made both operationally and financially in recent years, UnumProvident has essentially become a new company.” To mark the transition from fixing to growing, he commissioned a rebranding.

The New York office of The Gate Worldwide won this rebranding assignment. The renaming decision, from UnumProvident Corp. to Unum Group, was followed by the logo launch and a new ad campaign. The Gate's Beau Fraser said, "The logo walks a fine line between the stature and strength investors want to see, and the softer and more human side of the business, the company's focus on people."

Good job overall. Why did anyone think adding Provident to Unum was such a good idea in the first place? It was more likely the path of least resistance, at the time. The new wordmark is solid and functional yet leaves me a little uncomfortable—is it staring at me? (0% structural, 90% strategic, 10% functional)

You haven't heard of CVRD either, have you? Companhia Vale do Rio Doce is Brazil's largest corporation. And by acquiring Canada's Inco in 2006, it became the world's second-largest mining company (to BHP Billiton). Vale's rebranding was intended to break it out of anonymity, instantly and proudly, to become a "a gigantic Brazilian company present everywhere," in the words of CEO Roger Agnelli. Other goals were to replace the somewhat brutal, almost militaristic look of a once state-owned company with a more open public personality, and "to bring together all employees in one family."

To most of us, this looks like a name change; "Vale" reads like the English word that it is (for a small valley), here used creatively as a name. But in parts of Brazil, Vale was already the everyday communicative name of CVRD, known in Europe as Rio Doce. Clearly this was dysfunctional branding on a global scale, and CEO Agnelli fixed it.

The beautifully simple symbol, a "V" monogram, evokes a landscape, and Brazil in its colors. Agnelli sees in it a heart, mining and geographic elements, the green of nature, and the gold of wealth. Planning and design were a joint effort of Cauduro Martino in São Paulo and Lippincott in New York. Bottom line: an excellent name decision, and effective design execution; it has all the marks of a transformative rebranding, both internally and to the world.

Asked how much the change cost, Agnelli said both "too much" and "cheap," considering the opportunity "to unify the company, to give this new face to its vision, to give a name that can be used as the last name of all employees. . . . We are investing in pride, motivation, vision. It is a huge investment." (0% structural, 70% strategic, 30% functional)

You decide: Which of these was the best corporate rebranding of 2007, either as design or as leadership? My own picks: for design, Delta by Lippincott (with Landor's Brocade an appealing contender). For leadership, it's a toss-up between Vale's Agnelli, and The Paley's team of Mitchell and Ney.

Next year, we'll probably start with the January 2008 rebranding of Xerox. The saga continues.

The Branders Rebrand

The industry's undisputed founding firm, Lippincott & Margulies, was bought by Marsh & McLennan in 1986; in 2003, it dropped "Margulies" in favor of its owners' "Mercer" consulting brand.

Last year it dropped Mercer too, to become simply Lippincott. Walter Margulies, nevertheless, is remembered as the singular genius who understood and created the professional specialization of institutional identity planning and design, and who more than anyone else empowered, inspired, and trained its first two generations of practitioners.

One of Margulies' successor firms was Anspach Grossman Portugal, which was acquired by Martin Sorrel's WPP in 1989 to form the core of what was then somewhat curiously named Enterprise IG (IG was said to have no particular meaning—certainly not "Identity Group"). In 2007, Enterprise IG chose to become "The Brand Union." (The "The" is to be included in text but was not incorporated into The Brand Union's new carved-potato wordmark.) —T.S.