LAUNCHING YOUR NEW COMPANY NAME

Creating and selecting a new company name is a fun and challenging process. But it's not the end of the story. There's still much to do, from announcing your name internally and externally to handling legal and administrative details.

This document will help guide you through key elements of the process. We've divided your name launch into five categories:
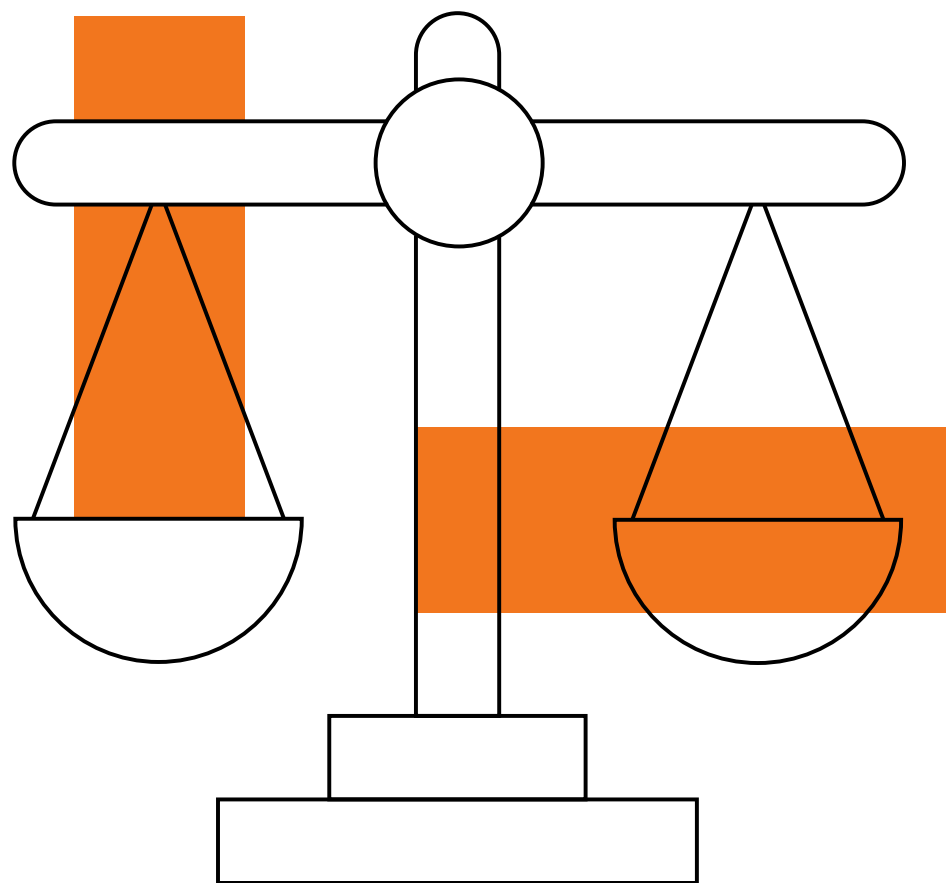
LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE

MARKETING & IDENTITY

DOMAIN NAMES & SOCIAL MEDIA

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

**EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

catchword

LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE

- Have your attorney submit an application for trademark registration to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)—and foreign equivalents, if appropriate.

- File a name change with the Secretary of State for your state and with city and county authorities.

- Check with your tax attorney for name-change filing issues related to subsidiaries, divisions, sister companies, etc.

- Update bank accounts, checks, and other financial paperwork.

- Check with your attorney regarding updates to existing legal documents and contracts, and update your name in your legal document templates.

- Update your company listing in databases, directories, catalogs, and professional associations, including online resources like Wikipedia, Yelp, Crunchbase.

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MARKETING & IDENTITY
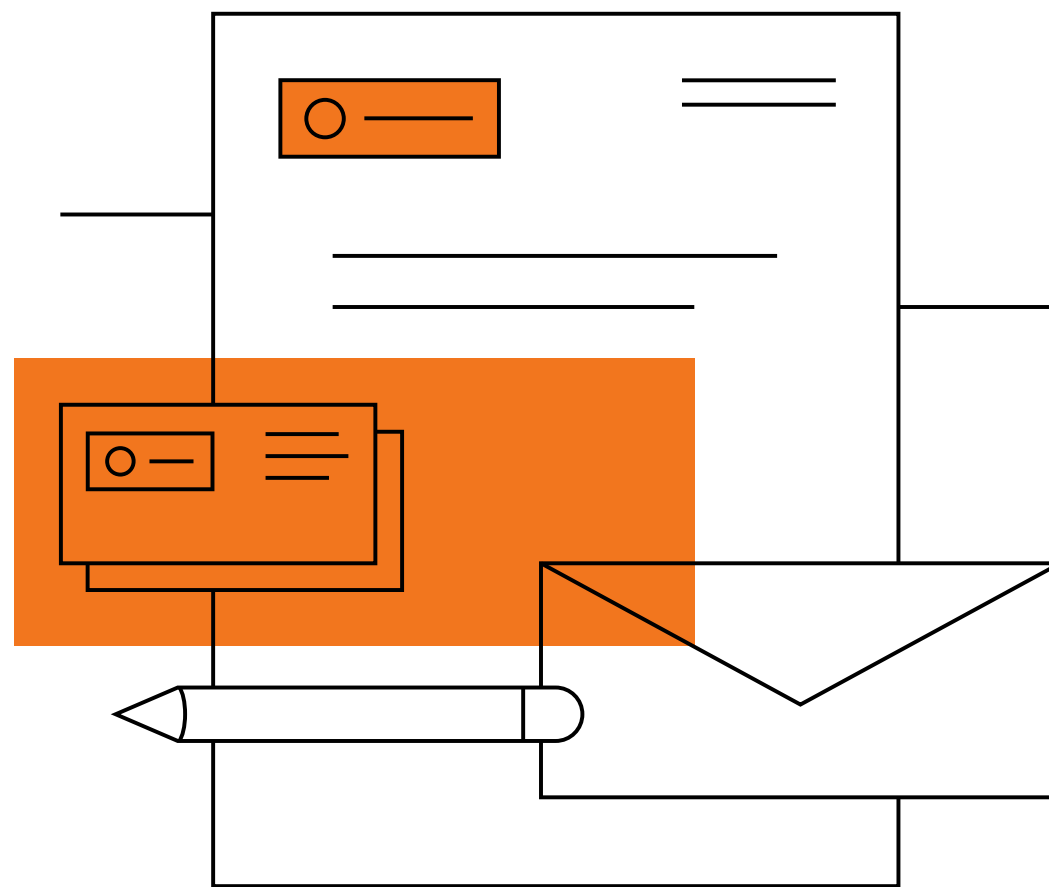
- Audit all current uses of your company name and logo (and tagline, if you have one) so you'll know what needs to be changed.

- Develop new visual ID elements, including logo/wordmark, color palette, and brand book.

- Create or update print and digital assets such as business cards, letterhead, and envelopes.

- Engage a web designer to create or update your site, and a designer to create or update brochures, presentation templates, visual aids, etc.

- Establish standardized transitional language to phase out your old name (e.g.,"NewName, formerly OldName").

- Write a Brand Story for your site, media releases, etc. to personalize and clarify the thinking behind the new name.

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DOMAIN NAMES & SOCIAL MEDIA
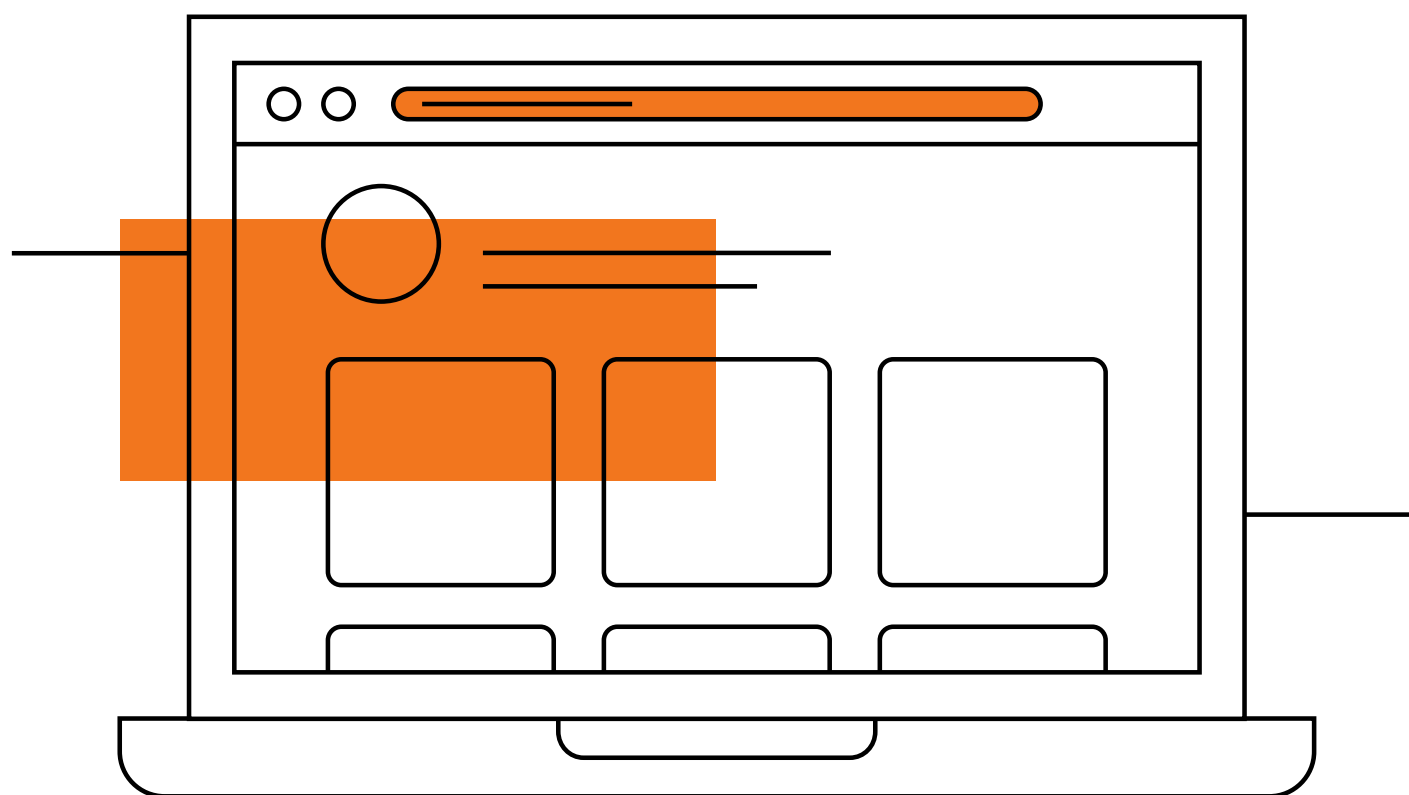
- Acquire relevant domain names:

  - Consider whether you need a .com or alternative gTLD. Exact .coms can be hard and expensive to come by, and you might find that another generic top-level domain—such as .health, .io, or .web—works well for your brand.

  - Consider your registrar options carefully based on services and pricing. The cost of keeping multiple domains can really add up, but bargain registrars might not offer all the features you need, such as web hosting.

  - Register domains defensively—not just potential misspellings of your name and hater URLs like "yournamesucks.com," but variants as well.

  - Dot your i's and cross your t's on locking your domains and keeping them up-to-date (current administrator information, auto-renewal arrangements, etc.).

- Register or update your company's social media accounts. If you can't get the handle you want, consider modifying based on your social media strategy (e.g., if recruitment is your goal, "join[name]" or "[name]getstarted" might work well). If possible, use the same wording in your domain name and social media handles.

- Update website content, as needed, for the new domain name. Forward your old website URL to your new one. Make sure DNS and Nameservers are correct and current. Set up Google Analytics using UTM codes and set up SSL Certificates (both optional but highly recommended).

- Update email addresses and email signatures and ensure old email addresses forward to the new.

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INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
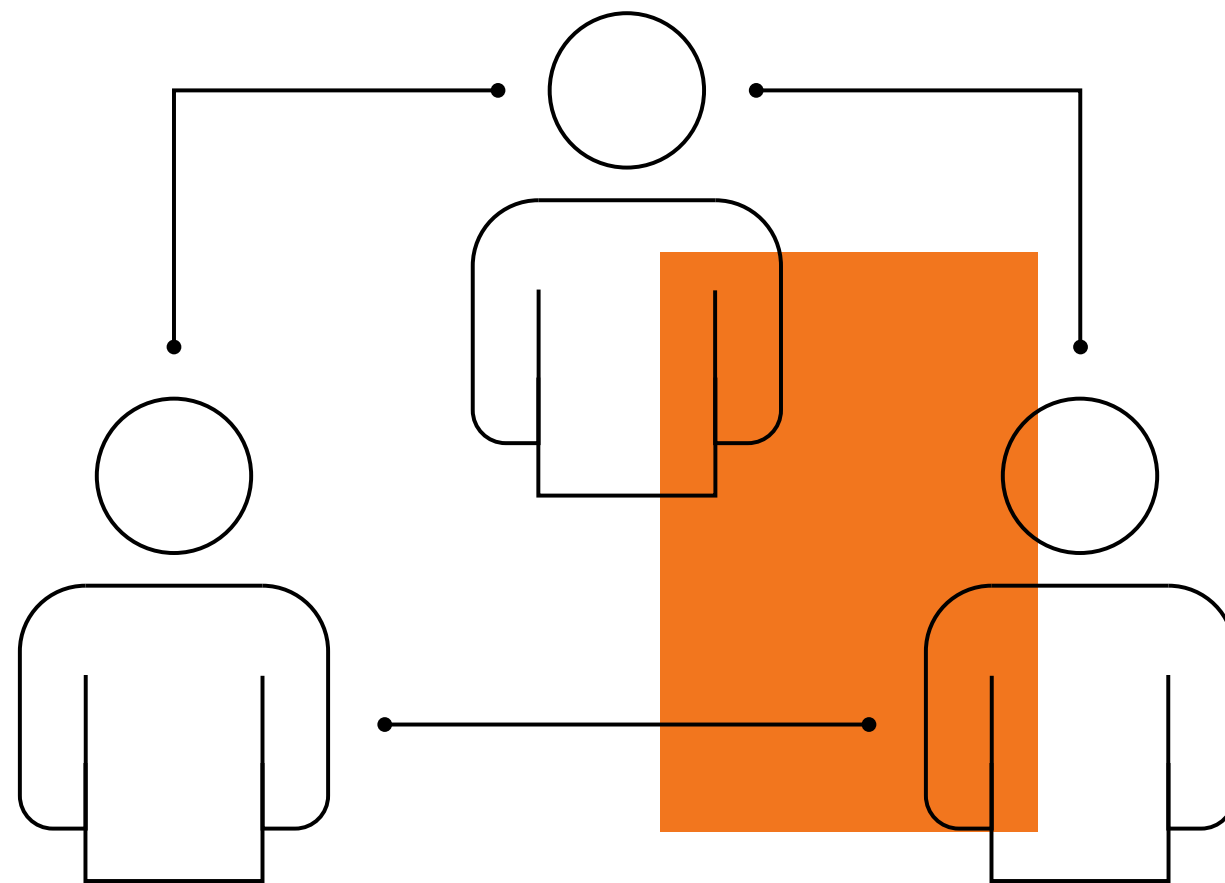
- Plan your internal announcement, and be sure to make it before informing external audiences. Consider the best way to reach and get buy-in from your internal stakeholders. Your announcement plan might include an email from the CEO, employee meeting with Q&A, videos, or shareholder event. Use this opportunity to galvanize the organization to "live the brand."

- Set up an intranet that addresses the change, including:

  – Reason for the new name

  – What the new name stands for

  – How the name / positioning speaks to each audience

  – Portal for employees to order new swag

  – FAQ section that addresses more practical matters (e.g., how to use the new name in client correspondence or the deadline for changing over all company signage)

- Roll out new brand merch early to get employees on board—branded caps, hoodies, headphones, and other useful/fun items can help build excitement.

- Involve HR to help acclimate employees to the new name and understand the rationale for the change.

- Consider offering brand training workshops to help employees feel comfortable with the new name and ensure correct usage.

- Recognize that not everyone may understand or approve of the name (particularly if you're rebranding after many years). Identify skeptics and turn them into advocates by listening to their concerns and asking them to take an active role in the announcement and transition.

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EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
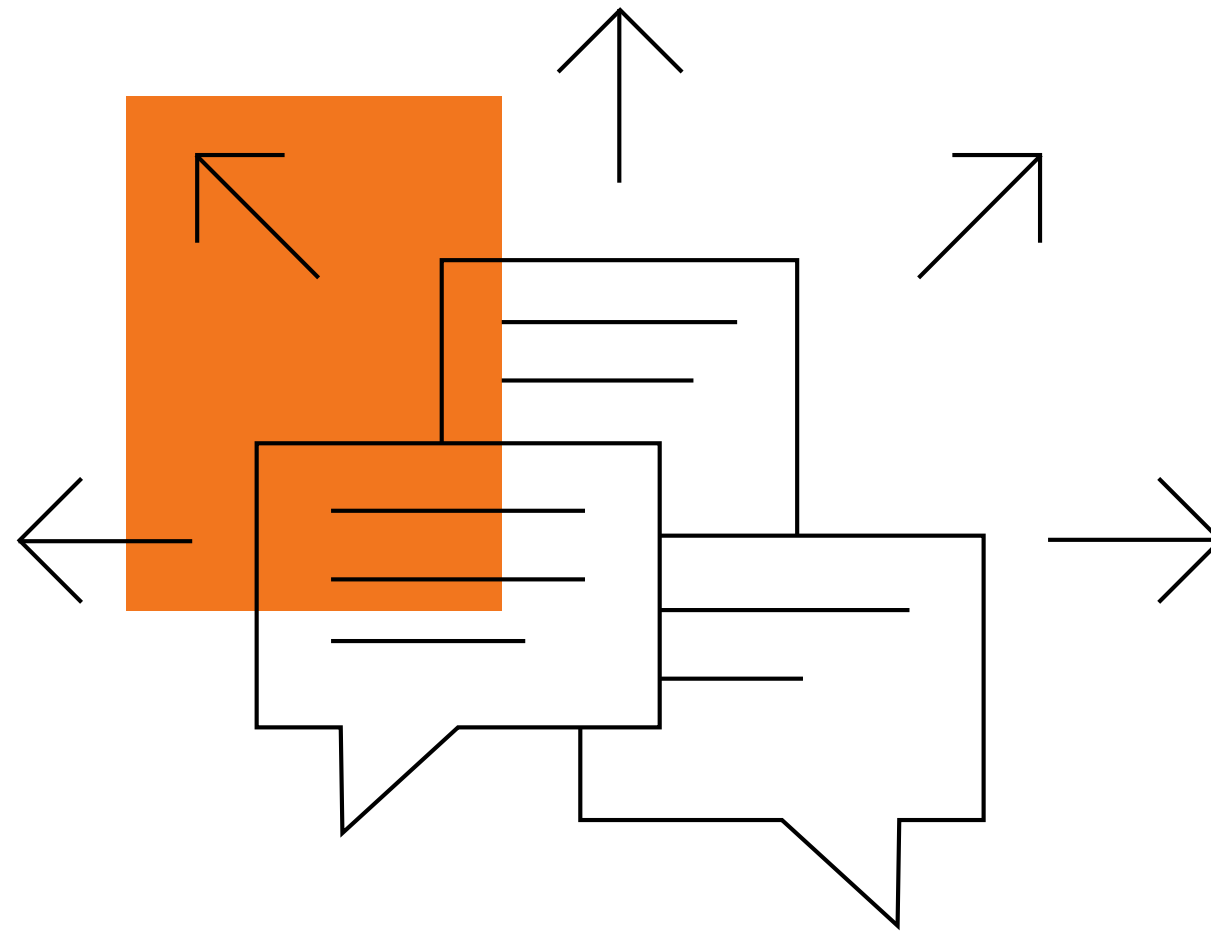
- Develop a plan for communicating the new name to customers, partners, and other key audiences. A brand video that explains the new identity and new brand story can be a helpful tool. You may want to reach out to your most important audiences directly by, for example, planning a CEO-led investors call. Be sure to address all practical issues such as how contracts will be affected.

- Develop a press release and social media posts to announce the change to media, the business community, and general audiences. You may want to hire a PR firm to engage media in your launch.

- Prepare transition messages and graphics for your social media accounts to convert followers to the new handles/accounts.

- Develop a website conversion strategy, including whether to implement a transition period or to switch over all at once. A dedicated rebrand section with FAQs and contact info for specific assistance can help customers, investors, and other audiences navigate the change. Your media release and brand story or video can be part of this section.

- Distribute branded swag to help excite key customers and partners.