



WICK & MORTAR

Rebrand Guide

2019

**To rebrand or not to rebrand,
that is the question.**



Introduction

In branding, as in life, things evolve. Perceptions change. Without adaptation or change, what rises will fall. At some point, most companies will face a choice: change perceptions and evolve the brand or become irrelevant. It's a natural process—one experienced by established companies and startups alike.

Despite incredible industry growth, cannabis brands are not immune. As an industry undergoing such rapid evolution, it should be expected that companies regularly take stock of their brand and chart new courses. Some moves will be drastic, others incremental. Many will rebrand or refresh, while other brands will undertake a complete overhaul.

Whatever process you settle on, the ultimate goal is to invest in and re-energize your brand. You will learn how your brand is perceived by audiences and competitors alike, and the factors that are unique to it.

Despite the unique variables facing each brand, there are a few general considerations to think about when deciding to rebrand. This rebranding guide will help shepherd you through this process. Not only will it help you decide if it's time to make one of the most vital investments in your brand, but how you can go about evolving its identity and perception.

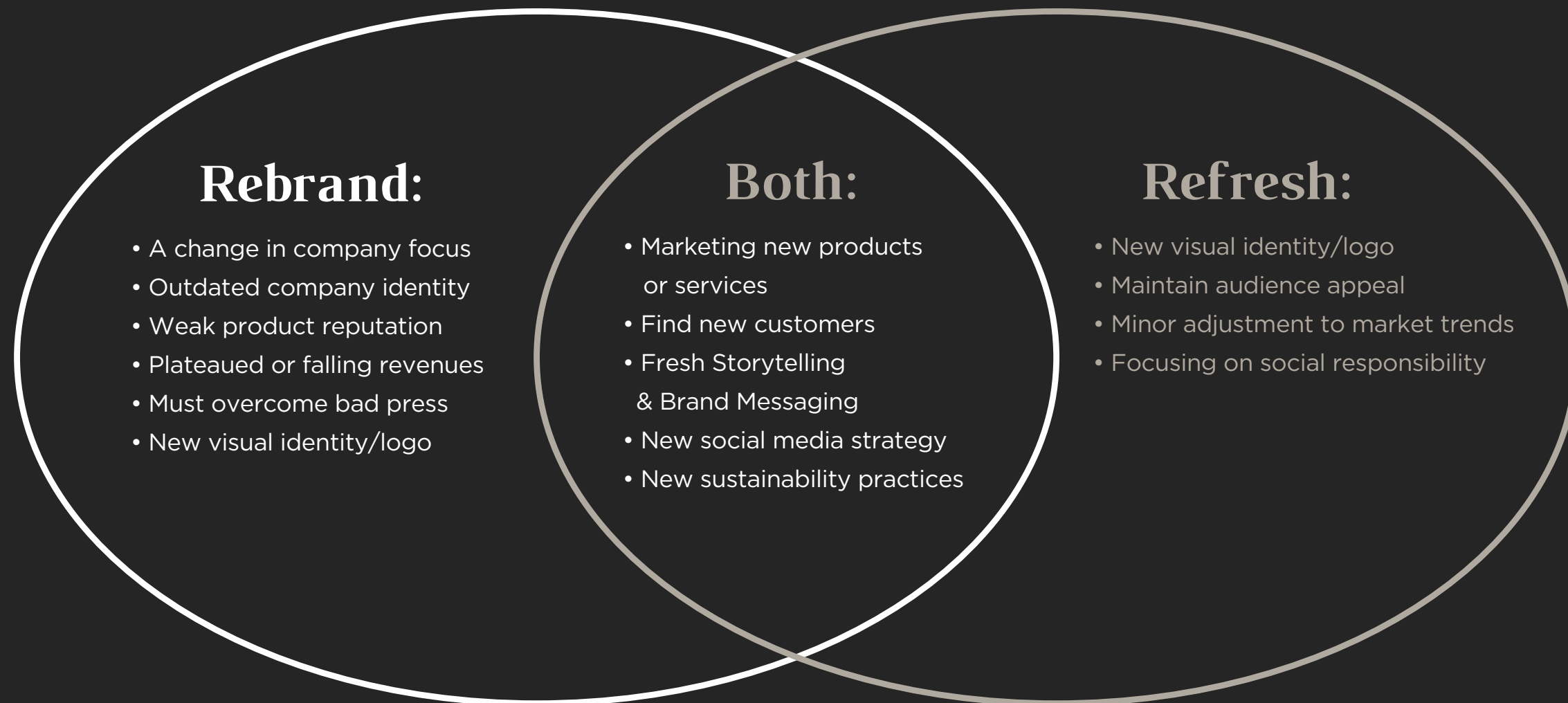
Jared Mirsky

Founder / CEO



Rebrand vs. Refresh

How to tell if your company needs a rebrand or refresh? A rebrand typically involves a complete tear down of a brand and a carefully crafted rebuild. A refresh, on the other hand, is more modest—tinkering with the brand to respond to marketplace changes. To further distinguish them, here are some things to think about when considering a rebrand or refresh.



3 Things to Consider

1

Research & Discovery

2

Reasons to Rebrand

3

The Benefits of Rebranding



1 Research & Discovery

In a rebrand, simply swapping out the logo won't do. The problems, as the previous infographic hints at, run deeper.

The rebranding process begins with research into the cannabis marketplace, and some personal reflection by the company. You will need to analyze what is and isn't working for your brand. Looking at existing and new market spaces and your company's success and potential within them, respectively, will help chart a path for a fruitful rebrand.

During the research phase, figure out what differentiates your business from other cannabis companies. If differentiation is marginal, think about where the company can go to achieve it.

After research and discovery, the more radical changes of rebranding commence. What follows is a step-by-step process for a rebrand.

- ✓ Creative Brief
- ✓ Brand Moodboard
- ✓ Naming Process
- ✓ Logo Design
- ✓ Brand Strategy & Copywriting
- ✓ Stationary & Social Media Graphics



Rebranding Steps 1-3



1. Creative Brief:

A Creative Brief is a vision, a guidebook to realizing a rebrand. To adapt Steve Jobs' quote of hockey great Wayne Gretzky, the brief is a document for thinking about where your company wants to be, and how you plan to get there. It sets the stage for everything that follows.



2. Moodboard:

Next, put together a Brand Moodboard. This is a helpful collage of images that helps a company define a brand and communicate its vision to the world. Much like a storyboard in the world of filmmaking, a brand moodboard will help marketers and designers craft the right brand image and story for its audience.

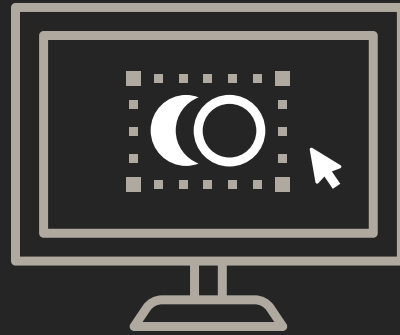


3. Naming Process:

What's in a name? For brands, quite a lot. If your company wants a new name, one that more accurately communicates its identity, or if it never had a good one in the first place, Naming the brand will be vital. Is the new name memorable? Does it have a certain aesthetic ring to it? Does the brand name clearly communicate the product and culture, and appeal to the demographic you're after? These and other questions will be important considerations in the naming process.



Rebranding Steps 4-6



4. Logo Design:

Like the name, a company's Logo communicates the brand's identity. A good brand name and logo walk hand in hand. But, as a visual graphic, the logo should communicate a brand's values, products, and services almost instantaneously. Think of Apple, or even Starbucks. Both have simple yet highly impactful logo designs. If done well, your brand logo will become a powerful and sticky symbol in the minds of your audience.



5. Brand Strategy:

Launching a new brand identity, whatever its root causes, will need finessing. What is your story? Who is your demographic? How should your brand talk? That's where Brand Strategy and Copywriting become a vital part to any brand's success.



6. Stationary & Social Media:

Since branding is perception, crafting attractive, meaningful visuals, as well as engaging text for advertising campaigns, the company website, and Stationary and Social Media Graphics will become incredibly important. In the short term, this part of the process will help a company reach its audience. Over the long term, it will keep them interested in the brand.



2

Reasons to Rebrand

Again, factors requiring a rebrand will be variable for different companies. It's helpful for brands, especially in this rapidly evolving market, to understand the factors that might necessitate a rebrand. Let's discuss some of them in more detail.

- ✓ New Product Launch
- ✓ Market Saturation
- ✓ Repositioning
- ✓ You're Outdated
- ✓ Company Merger
- ✓ Going International
- ✓ Demographic/Market Changes



Blast Off



1. New Product Launch:

Perhaps your company is launching a new product line because your current products aren't selling. There could be several reasons for this move.

A new audience demographic has arrived, and these individuals are in search of something fresh instead of established.

Alternatively, your products may have outgrown your current brand. An example of this scenario would be a company with a largely regional focus expanding nationally. On top of all this, your company might have skipped steps in the early branding process, like creating a vibrant visual identity and logo, differentiating product, and so on.



Needle in a Haystack

2. Market Saturation:

Last year, chocolates & gummies sales were strong. According to BDS Analytics, they were among the top 10 cannabis product trends of 2018.

Suppose that your business, founded a few years ago to sell flowers, is pivoting into edibles. The goal: high end cannabis chocolates that wouldn't look out of place at an artisanal chocolate factory. Maybe you also want to evolve the concept of gummies, making it artisanal as well, instead of just a nostalgic throwback the gummy bears of childhood.

You put the plan into action. But, despite great taste and pleasant effects, market saturation hits the edibles market and sales are weak.

What went wrong?

Well, perhaps your company's edible products aren't standing out amongst the competition. Why? It could come down to factors like packaging, logo, communications, and storytelling. New logo and packaging, combined with good marketing communications, will help your brand reach audiences with your artisanal edible offerings.



Good Guys Win



3. Repositioning:

Imagine your cannabis retail brand has a bad reputation. For several years it has suffered under weak social and environmental responsibility. The company has poor workplace diversity and isn't sourcing cannabis from sustainable farms and operations. By repositioning, a cannabis brand can overcome this bad reputation.

For one, your brand can take steps to focus on diversity and inclusion in the workplace. But beyond simply altering hiring practices, the company could join or launch local efforts to support and enhance gender and racial diversity.

In such a brand's case, a proactive approach would be better than sitting on the sidelines.

As for environmental responsibility, a brand could explore various ways of implanting sustainability into their business model. A lot of this will come down to sourcing of cannabis products from sustainable farms, as well as food and beverage companies. But it doesn't end there. A brand can also work on projects related to energy usage at the retail outlets. A campaign that communicates these business practices, from the brand website to its social media channels, will help in creating a successful repositioning of the brand.



Been There, Done That

2009-2017
ONLINE MARIJUANA
DESIGN



REBRANDED 2018

2019
WICK & MORTAR



4. You're Outdated (faux pas):

Ten years ago, you packaged flowers for California's medical marijuana industry. For most of those ten years, the product was successful. The strains were good, and people were buying. But as the market changed, your brand did not.

Overall, the presentation is unprofessional, and there is a failure to recognize and respond to consumer demographics. Brand packaging still features graphics of marijuana leaves, skewing it more toward the male stoner than any potential female demographic. The online design layout, imagery, and typography is just as bad. And even worse, customers can neither see nor smell the product.

Clearly, a rebrand is in order.

A more modern and gender neutral packaging and web presence would help the brand appeal to a wider demographic. A view window on the packaging would allow customers to see the product, while a one-way valve, like those found on coffee bean packages, would allow buyers to smell the flowers.

Another type of outdated brand might be a company whose offering or area of expertise has changed. You've launched new products, like a cannabis vape oil, but your old branding doesn't reflect this change in focus. New visuals and messaging would communicate this evolution to various demographics.



Shake and Bake

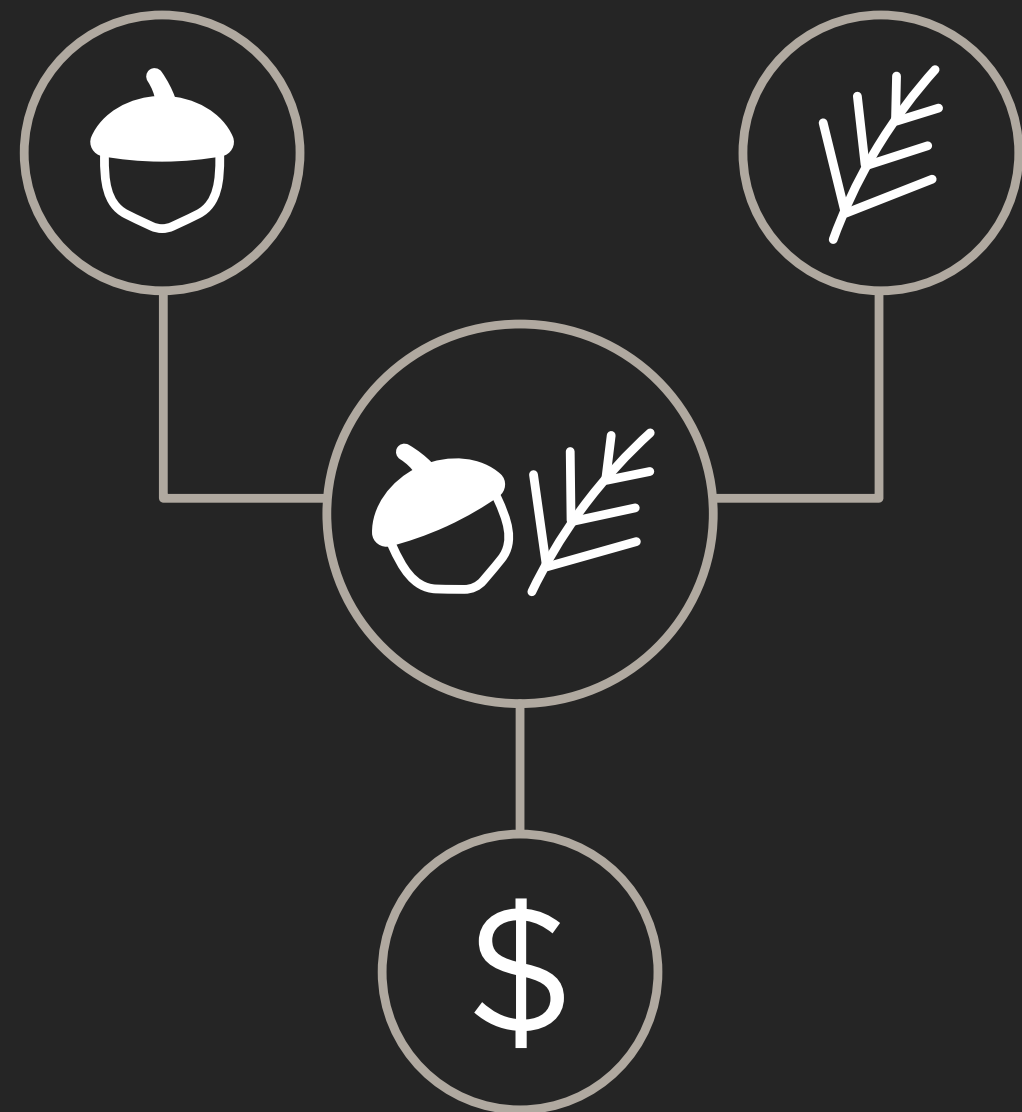
4. Company Merger:

You're a cannabis retailer on the East Coast with a few Midwest outlets. Let's say you're merging with a large West Coast retailer that has funding and business infrastructure to establish a national brand. Since your brand might be unfamiliar to a vast swath of the country, a rebrand is probably in order.

A rebrand of two merged companies will have to achieve several objectives. Brand messaging will have to be combined and refined. The logo will have to be reworked, as will packaging, out of home advertising, online design, and social media campaigns.

In the merger process, certain products will be prioritized over others.

Some products might be discontinued, and some new ones introduced. A rebrand will have to reflect these changes, communicating them to customers in each brand's respective regions.



We're Huge in Japan

5. Going International:

In 2015, you created a cannabis beverage product in Olympia, Washington. It's a hit, and you're steadily expanding nationally in the wake of state legalization. But you have much larger plans—you want to take the cannabis beverage international. Canada legalized marijuana in 2018, and it's close to Washington. You feel that the brand could find a great new market just to the north.

There are many things a brand will need to think about in such a scenario. First, Canada's compliance and regulations will be different from Washington's and other US states. Packaging will have to communicate to buyers various safety and legal buyer information, as well as restrictions on international transport.

Communications will likely have to be tinkered with to appeal to local Canadian demographics. Messaging that works in Washington might well fit for nearby Vancouver, but not in the province of Alberta. And certain areas of Canada might be more receptive to a new cannabis drink than others.

A rebrand will help your company chart the right path.

The price point will also vary. So market research into pricing, demographics, and messaging will help your brand adjust to a nearby but different international market.



Keeping it Lit

6. Demographic/Market Changes:

Picture a scenario where a cannabis brand markets its products to the youth demographic. 19 to 34-year olds constitute a major market demographic, but every five to ten years it's going to change as new generations transition into it. Those cannabis brands that can make the adjustment to target the new demographic will win brand influence and market share.

Look at Adidas. During the Aughts, Adidas was not the hip brand with youth that it is now. It still had influence in the shoe and apparel industries, but it didn't have cultural cache or impactful brand influence to enhance its market share. As the older millennials transitioned into adulthood, and the younger ones came of age, Adidas offered new products in the so-called "athleisure wear" category, with a brand strategy that focused on collaborations, digital marketing, and social media influencing.

Similarly, a cannabis company focused on the youth demographic needs to watch for newly dominant trends. A rebrand will allow such a company to research what is happening within subcultures, and the wider culture, and calibrate products or services appropriately.

YouTube and Instagram videos, for instance, would be a great way to reach this demographic. But in the future, what once worked well will inevitably change. The rebranding process will allow brands to stay current and relevant, especially as media and technology change.



3

The Benefits of Rebranding

• REBRAND GUIDE •

If done right, a rebrand has many positive effects. Overall marketplace relevancy is near the top of this list. No brand, whether inside or outside of the cannabis industry, wants to face a market where established and potential demographics lack brand awareness, or could care less about a brand. Below are a few of the benefits of a rebranding campaign.

- ✓ Increased Sales
- ✓ Increased Trust
- ✓ Better Technology
- ✓ Attract Top-Tier Talent
- ✓ Interest from Potential investors
- ✓ Additional Intellectual Property



Rebranding Benefits 1-3

1. Increased Sales:

A rebrand is an investment. And those brands that make that investment will see a return on it; or, rather, several returns. For one, a rebrand will be good for sales.

Before Steve Jobs rejoined Apple, the Silicon Valley company was seeing quarterly falling revenues for years. Jobs' Apple rebrand, which included a new logo, products, and marketing campaigns, lifted the tech company's fortunes, leading to a \$1 trillion valuation in 2018.

For companies in the cannabis industry, there can also be a return on investment with a rebrand. Logo changes, new website design, new social media content—all of these things and more will help cultivate a more aware and loyal audience. With that comes sales growth.

2. Increased Trust:

Successful brands communicate several thoughts and emotions to its audience. Some are near instantaneous, others take more time to develop. But any company should want their brand to instantly communicate trust in its audience.

A good rebranding campaign will nurture an increase in trust.

The product or service must innately generate trust, which can be cultivated by proper brand identity and communications.

3. Better Technology:

Powerful brands make the best use of the most cutting edge technologies. With a rebrand, a company can invest in technologies, helping them deliver a better product and overall experience to their audience.

A cannabis company that wants to rebrand for mobile e-commerce will have an advantage over a company that resists such change. Other technologies, like virtual and augmented reality, will allow brands to better engage with their audiences.

Better technology will also sustain and enhance relevancy in the eyes of audiences. If your brand isn't moving with the times, especially technologically, the times will pass it by.

Technology becomes obsolete, and so do brands. Disrupt this natural process with the innovative tools at your disposal.



Rebranding Benefits 4-6

4. Attract Top-Tier Talent:

A culturally relevant, innovative brand will also yield human capital. Top-tier talent want to work for brands that create products and experiences that matter to people.

Beyond the brand's product, they want to be part of a culture that shares their values.

If a brand is bordering on cultural irrelevance, the best talent won't come flocking. With such talent, new and fresh ideas will follow, strengthening your brand for the future.

5. Interest from Potential Investors:

In a successful rebrand, audience perception will enhance commercial value beyond the product or service offered. This is brand equity. When a brand has this, the business isn't just attractive to customers—it's attractive to potential investors.

Not all cannabis businesses will need investors. But those looking to grow their market share, or even just move into another market space, will create a more attractive brand for investors. A successful rebrand will prove that your brand is worthy of investment. That it is unique and relevant.

As with any good thing, people will want to be part of it. Doubly so for investors.

6. Create Additional Intellectual Property:

This can also relate to market saturation in the cannabis industry. With the overuse of like terms and imagery, many companies' branding efforts have lost stickiness in the marketplace. IP acts as a kind of glue to the consumer's memory of you. Heavily differentiating your brand and creating distinctiveness in its design can only provide it with a stronger first impression.

By rebranding, there is a potential to build stronger associations with your brand through utilizing new and distinct design, naming, and identity. When we look at rebranding in this way, it can be seen as a much more comprehensive service than simply creating a different name and logo. By targeting specific demographics, we narrow the scope of how a brand is viewed amidst the noise that now dominates the cannabis industry.



**Rethink, renew and reshape your
brand to enhance the customer
experience and get sticky.**



**Thank you for taking the time
to learn more about Wick & Mortar
and how we can help your brand
rise to the top of the industry!**

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU SOON
