

**Editorial: *Prioritization of the Precision-Marketing Efforts and Rigorous Brand Building,
Based on Commitment to Authenticity***



In our last RDCM Issue, starting from how we are always feeling great talking with our experienced, knowledgeable, and well-informed Readers, we made reference to many significant aspects, such as how important is to remember key details of lessons learned but forgotten and to navigate the innovation landscape, including by both using crisis as a learning experience in dealing with a changing environment, and making distinction between resilience thinking and efficiency thinking, valorizing both dynamic capabilities, and customers' and partners' ecosystems. And as this year's end is a going on instilling acquired knowledge in us, we chose to add new information in the discussion:

- At the beginning of this year, McKinsey's representatives (Bibby et al., 2021) recommended the prioritization of the precision-marketing efforts (in order to seize granular growth opportunities not only on the basis of capturing new data and searching for new behavioral relationships, but also on enablement of rapid experimentation). And that within the context in which other McKinsey's representatives (Ader et al., 2021) underlined the role of the so-called full-funnel marketing approach (which combines the power of performance marketing and brand building through linked teams/close team collaboration, measurement systems, and KPIs), as a total shift in how marketing works (brand marketers adopting, for instance, test-and-learn capabilities);
- Visual Capitalist (Routley, 2021) examined some probable reasons for Facebook's rebranding (Facebook the parent company, not the social network) to Meta, starting from some preeminent categories of rebranding (see figure below). According to Routley, the most important reason among several Facebook undertook this rebranding was the association with negative

externalities, and his founder (once the most admired CEO in Silicon Valley), and then behind the metaverse hype there is some substance (the ambitions first signaled by Facebook in 2014, on the occasion of acquiring the virtual reality headset maker Oculus);



Figure no. 1: Some of the categories of rebranding that stand out the most

Source: Adaptation from Routley, N., 2021. *Saying Bye to Facebook: Why Companies Change Their Name*, Visual Capitalist, October 27 (work cited)

- Latana's recent Guide to Rebranding (Latana is a valuable AI-powered brand tracking tool) presented interesting rebranding case studies, such as MasterCard, as shown in the below figure (Latana a, 2021), also drawing our attention to the need, among other things, to have a rigorous understanding of rebranding, including from the point of view of developing a holistic brand strategy etc.;

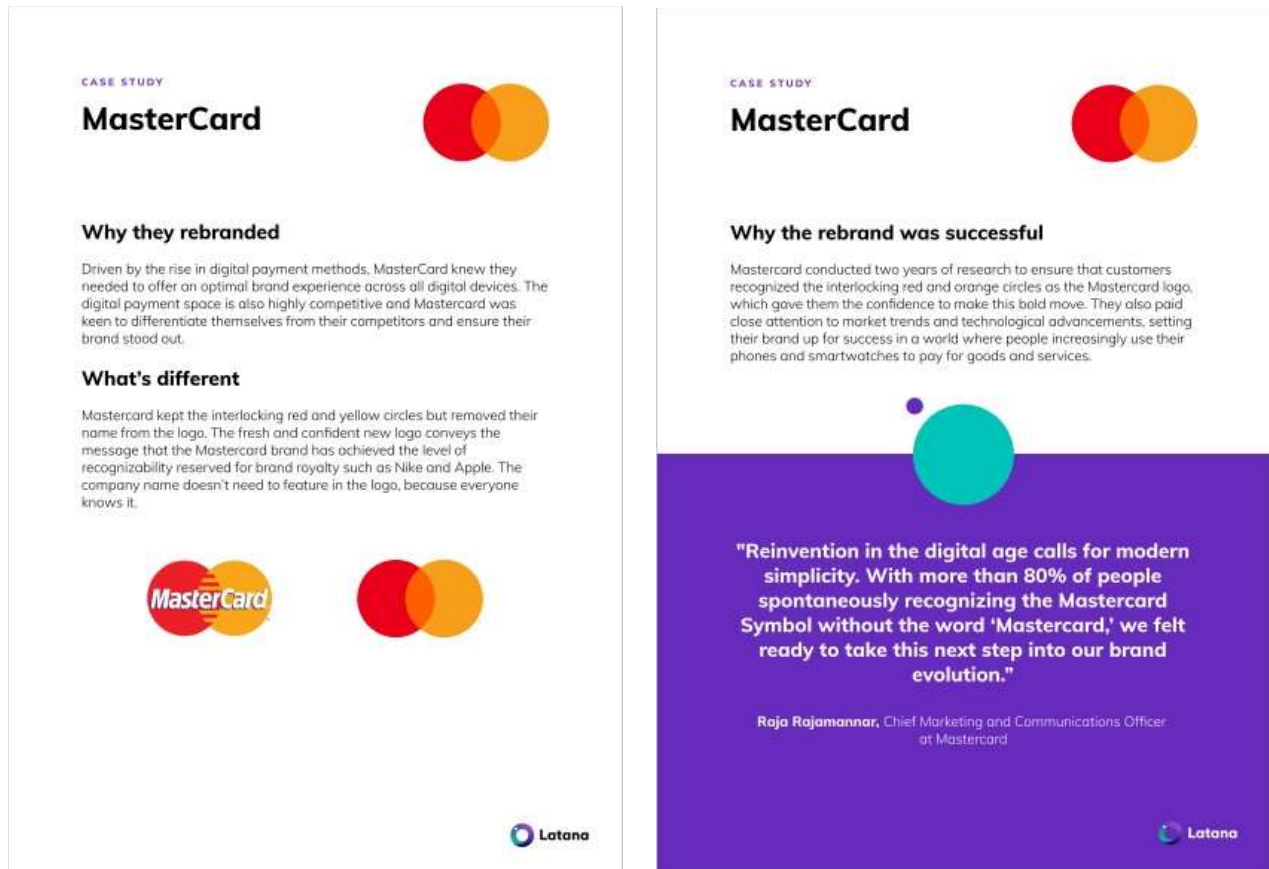


Figure no. 2: Rebranding Case Study MasterCard

Source: Adaptation from Latana, 2021. *The Ultimate Guide to Rebranding*. [pdf] December 23, 2021, pp. 27-28 (work cited)

- Also recently, CB Insights (2021) tracked a16z's investments (a16z is a numeronym representing the venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz, a legendary investor firm) over the past five years to see where this venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz identified the next big opportunity: NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens), crypto exchanges, and other blockchain-based technologies; The metaverse; Self-driving vehicles etc.;
- Digitization, AI, and automation are seen by manufacturers as top drivers of productivity and profitability for the coming three years (McKinsey & Company, 2021);
- Gartner (Reeves, 2021) reminded us that as today's consumers are very much in favor of authenticity and simplicity, now it's time to relook at the brand strategy through the lens of authenticity to better deliver (considering: clarity, consistency, caring, curiosity, communication, confirmation);
- Latana also quoted the Founder of the research and strategy consultancy The Shopper Collective, Peter Wilson, as saying as follows: *"Driving awareness, both aided and unaided, can be a positive contributor to usage and ultimately loyalty. Loyalty (and brand equity) will emerge*

as a result of a positive experience of interacting with or using your brand. Ultimately you want people to try you, love the experience, and continue using you” (Latana b, 2021).

This year marked the important historical event of the 30th Anniversary of the Romanian-American University (RAU), Rector Costel Negricea (Honorary Member of the Romanian Distribution Committee), a true promoter of a digital transformation, confirming RAU Brand activation.

There are so many lessons one can learn from the so-called phygital retail, that is a rising battlefield where all the above-mentioned aspects and ideas will continue to be rapidly experimented. As shown by Mixson (2021), in its fight against Amazon (which has surpassed Walmart in sales for the first time in the summer of this year), Artificial Intelligence (AI) represents Walmart’s new weapon. It is well-known that Walmart’s Intelligent Retail Lab is a reputed real-world shopping environment where technology driven CX is improved, as in the case RetailAI® Fresh solution that can identify produce within seconds of it being placed on the scale (based on new AI technology using computer vision).

And allow us to end by making again reference to the valuable CB Insights: *“As the Covid-19 pandemic has charted its unprecedented path around the world, it’s carried with it the question: What will Covid-19’s legacy be? From healthcare to education to entertainment to manufacturing, technology innovators are stepping forward to help answer that question... In some cases, the technological changes inspired by Covid-19 will come in the form of an acceleration of existing trends — for example, industrial automation and contactless payments. In other cases, like virtual reality, 3D printing, or telehealth, the crisis may change the course of the industry, enabling companies to demonstrate value that, until now, consumers have been unable or unwilling to see”* (CB Insights b, 2021).

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