

Was Gap's New Logo Crap?

MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

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Reactions and Decisions

Brand President Declares Crowdsourcing

Oct 4th 2010 - As mentioned in the incident, just hours after Gap's sudden online logo change, upset customers expressed their dissatisfaction in social media regarding the new brand logo and the way Gap decided to change it without any warning.

Oct 7th 2010 - Three days after the change Gap decided to face the overwhelming criticism and posted the following statement on their official Facebook page:

"Thanks for everyone's input on the new logo! We've had the same logo for 20+ years, and this is just one of the things we're changing. We know this logo created a lot of buzz and we're thrilled to see passionate debates unfolding! So much so we're asking you to share your designs. We love our version, but we'd like to see other ideas. Stay tuned for details in the next few days on this crowdsourcing project."

After the announcement, Gap received mixed feedback consisting of anger, excitement and confusion, questioning if the change was a crowdsourcing project all along or a way to handle the negative response? Gap received a multitude of new logo submissions both from customers, graphic designers and the general public. However, Gap also this time faced a backlash having design communities and graphic designers raising their voice in social media about Gap's approach to "solve the problem". Paul Soulellis, creative director of New York's Soulellis Studio, was one of many who asked other designers to not participate in Gap's call for submissions in his widespread Twitter post:

"My plea to designers: do not post new logos for @Gap's benefit. Protect your profession & insist that work be strategic & compensated."

Management Decisions

Oct 10th 2010 - Only six days after the new logo release, Gap decided to change back to the old logo. Marka Hansen, the president of Gap brand North America, made a public announcement in a press release explaining that the way Gap handled the logo change should have been managed differently. Gap stated that the reason the company has decided to change back to the old blue box logo was because they realized how committed the customers were to the old logo and that they acknowledged this support.

In the press release Marka Hansen explained:

"We've seen an outpouring of comments from customers and the online community in support of the iconic blue box logo [...] we've learned just how much energy there is around our brand. All roads were leading us back to the blue box, so we've made the decision not to use the new logo on Gap.com any further [...] at Gap brand, our customers have always come first. We've been listening to and watching all of the comments this past week. We heard them say over and over again they are passionate about our blue box logo, and they want it back. So we've made the decision to do just that – we will bring it back across all channels."

Regarding the crowdsourcing strategy, Marka Hansen also mentioned in the press release that "This wasn't the right project at the right time for crowdsourcing" giving the impression that the project from the very beginning was meant to be a crowdsourcing project, something Gap has been unclear with. We still do not know if the logo change was a quick fix in brand identity, part of a well thought through marketing strategy or a first step to initiate a crowdsourcing project. Nevertheless, the intention was not communicated to the customers, leaving the impression that crowdsourcing was rather a last minute solution than part of the marketing strategy.

Note that the Gap rebranding stunt was estimated to have cost the company USD 100 million.