

# The Marketing Genius Behind Snapchat's Name Change

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When a company makes a major change to its brand or image, any number of things can happen. Loyal users may reject the change -- as happened when Coca-Cola [tried to introduce "New Coke"](#) in one of the worst marketing disasters in history. People may scarcely notice the change, as when [Google stealthily changed its name to Alphabet](#) with seemingly no major corresponding changes to its products lineup.

Or, a company making such a change may well inspire excitement and positive attention from loyal users and potential new customers alike.

The latter seems to be the case for the company previously known as Snapchat, which [renamed itself "Snap Inc."](#) and introduced a new product to go along with the change just days ago. Already, the company is getting positive reception and excitement from its announcement.

So, what exactly did it do to generate that kind of response?

## Two changes from Snapchat -- I mean 'Snap'

Let's take a look at what Snap actually announced. There are two items here -- a new hardware product, and the company name change itself.

- **Spectacles.** First, Snap released a [video snippet to Business Insider](#), demonstrating its new "Spectacles" product. The product is a pair of wearable glasses that function as a camera; simply tapping a button on the side of the product will record up to 10 seconds of video via a camera that mimics the first-person perspective. The videos will be recorded in a circular format, and can play back on any device. At the end of the promotional video, Spectacles the product is introduced by "Snap, Inc.," which in turn introduces the company's new name.
- **Snap Inc.** Hours after the release of the promotional video, Snap confirmed the name change and provided more details about the product (including its price, \$129) to the [Wall Street Journal](#). The company also made a detailed announcement about each change on its news page, where chief executive Evan Spiegel explained the new name as a logical decision: Since Snap is now making actual products that go beyond the chat-

centric app, it only made sense, he said. Spiegel also insisted that the fun, familiar character of the brand would remain intact, joking that the change was more for the “Wall Street crowd” than anybody else.

## What they did right

So, why is Snap’s unveiling getting such a warm, interested reception? What can we all take away from this?

### 1. Audience timing

First, Snap nailed the timing. Growing, expanding and changing your business are all difficult maneuvers. Try to do something too soon, and you could wind up alienating an audience that’s still getting used to your brand. For example, if you expand too quickly and start selling products outside your original niche, you could wind up losing new and old customers alike. On the other hand, if you wait too long to make a change -- as did Yahoo with some of its [recent rebranding and misguided new product developments](#) -- it could be too late to change users’ impressions of your brand. Snapchat hit the timing perfectly, catering to a committed audience without waiting too long to transition.

### 2. Proactive announcement and control

Next, Snap cleverly teased out the details of its new features. First, it staged a “leak” of a video, generating viral visibility by sheer virtue of the fact that this video wasn’t meant to be seen. It then almost immediately followed up with a major news reveal, giving out specific details before users could be left to their own speculative devices. Not long after that, the company made some formal announcements on its website, catering to its most loyal fans and adhering to its signature brand voice.

### 3. Gentle rebranding.

“Snapchat” to “Snap” isn’t a major change, and its Spectacles product, while a unique offer from the company, still caters to the brand’s primary goal of telling visual stories. In some ways, this is a massive step forward for the brand, but in others, it’s the same brand you’ve always known. This move will make loyal users even more loyal, and help reaffirm the brand’s image in new users’ eyes.

### 4. Curiosity.

Finally, Snap is intentionally piquing curiosity among its users; the name change is slightly mysterious, and Evan Spiegel has alluded to even more developments to come. On top of a [\\$1.81 billion dollar fund-raising round](#) earlier this year, I think we can all expect to see some interesting things coming from Snap in the near future.

On the surface, a change like “Snapchat” to “Snap” may not seem like a big deal, and in some ways, it isn’t. But in other ways, it’s a dramatic overhaul that’s being cleverly introduced as a subtle transformation.

Snap is walking the branding and marketing line carefully, catering to its existing audience while simultaneously charging forward as a leader and forward-thinker in the social media industry. And those are strong steps by a strong company.

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