

Strategic rebranding a winning case for 'msl'

Michael Sing Lawyers–Legal Solutions has been a well established full service law firm on the Gold Coast for more than 20 years – but it found a compelling case to rebrand.



Michael Sing and Mark Chapman match new brand identity to quality legal services.

The decision to rebrand the firm to, simply, 'msl' and the way the process unfolded offers an enlightening case study for other businesses considering their brand positioning.

Why did this regional law firm with a strong professional reputation decide to rebrand? Was the change cosmetic or strategic and what prompted this risky initiative?

Michael Sing, managing partner of Michael Sing Lawyers, explained, "Law is like any other business; as a service provider we have a marketable commodity and we are prone to the relevant market forces.

"While our clients recognise our existing brand and are loyal to the firm, and we are also well known in the region, certain changes within the firm convinced us that rebranding would have a positive strategic

outcome. Far more significant was our analysis of business in the region, particularly the Gold Coast.

"It was our own assessment of how business on the Coast had changed and how we needed to adapt to these changes that led us to believe rebranding was necessary. As the fastest growing region in Australia, the Gold Coast has a flourishing urban development and an expanding economic base with a diverse range of industries," Mr Sing said.

"The region offers an environment ideal for growth and expansion and increasing business potential with over 16,000 people moving to the area every year. This has prompted a massive \$66million wave of development which covers every sector of the market.

"In short, the Gold Coast is no longer just a tourist destination; it is a thriving, progressive city with a corporate culture. This is a fundamental change to how the region was regarded in business terms five years ago.

"The whole region demands and expects a dynamic law service provider who not only understands local issues and has local knowledge, but is able to adapt to regional changes. Our revised structure, new logo and minor name change announces to the business world that we have recognised this cultural shift and we are ready and able to provide a full legal service to this dynamic region.

"For us at msl, the decision to rebrand meant reconnecting with our clients."

Once the decision to rebrand had been made the hard work began, according to msl CEO, Mark Chapman. The firm analysed rebranding successes and failures and noticed one recurring element in the history of failures was the lack of employee involvement, he said.

Msl not only addressed this, ensuring the re-branding process involved consultations with staff and clients to

determine their perceptions of the firm, but acknowledged that it must be careful not to foster a disconnect between the desire to freshen the firm's look and presenting the firm's services in a way that clients would understand and appreciate.

DEVELOPMENT DRIVER

Michael Sing decided to appoint one of his lawyers, Nicola Frame to the position of business development manager, with the aim of having a lawyer, who understood the business of providing legal services, ensure a seamless 'translation' of the firm's new position to existing and future clients.

Mr Sing said, "We placed great importance on the firm's name and logo. These had to signify who we are now and create a positive image. We recognised that Michael Sing Lawyers–Legal Solutions, was a well known name, but also realised that the corporate trend was for shorter and simpler names.

"We wanted to avoid disenfranchising loyal clients so an element of continuity was important. We eventually decided upon simply 'msl', an acronym of our full name but representative of more an entity brand, rather than an individual's brand."

Only time will tell how successful the msl rebranding initiative has been, but so far the firm has received positive feedback from clients, business partners and other professional service providers.

"The positive response from the business community to our re-branding confirms we are part of a dynamic and resourceful business region and we were right to go ahead with our decision to re-brand the firm," said msl CEO Mark Chapman.

"It is widely felt the firm's new and dynamic image matches its ability to offer quality legal services locally, regionally and, in relation to the firm's migration services practice, even internationally.

"Our theme of 'lawyers who listen' will reinforce that we have undergone a strategic change. Communication and value-added services still remain tenets of the firm."

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