

Allison in Law360: Trademark Food For Thought When Rebranding

October 29, 2024 Annie Allison

PRACTICES Trademark and Advertising, Intellectual Property

Haynes Boone Counsel [Annie Allison](#) authored an article for *Law360* after Campbell's Soup Company recently made headlines after announcing plans to drop "Soup" from its iconic company name.

Read an excerpt below.

Campbell Soup Co. recently announced plans to drop "Soup" from the company's name in a strategic move to highlight the company's expanding food empire.

Brand makeovers, like the one underway by Campbell, can have a significant effect on a company's intellectual property rights, particularly as it relates to a company's trademarks. With some thoughtful strategizing and planning, companies can more readily anticipate smooth and seamless rebrands, and hopefully avoid becoming cautionary tales used as fodder for law school exams.

The Campbell Change

After nearly 100 years, Campbell Soup Co. will simply be known as "The Campbell's Company," pending shareholder approval this coming November.

In his announcement to investors, the company's CEO, Mark Clouse, praised the "subtle yet important change" as a way to retain the company's "iconic name recognition, reputation and equity ... while better reflecting the full breadth of the company's portfolio."

Campbell is just the latest in a long line of well-known brands to announce substantial brand makeovers in recent years — we've watched Twitter's conversion to X, Dunkin' drop its "Donuts," Weight Watchers slim down to just WW and Sierra Mist bubble into Starry.

Companies rebrand or initiate brand refreshes for any number of reasons, including to better communicate their direction and values, distance themselves from negative associations, target new audiences, differentiate themselves from competitors, reflect a corporate merger, or simply refresh an outdated image.

In Campbell's case, "Soup" literally became the company's middle name in 1922 after nearly 50 years in the soup game. The company acquired its first side hustle — vegetable juice company V8 — in 1948, and now, more than 20 billion cans of soup and dozens of acquisitions later, the company owns a broad array of food and snack brands, including Pacific Foods, Pace, Swanson, Rao's Homemade, Goldfish and Pepperidge Farm.

As Clouse highlighted for Campbell investors, dropping "Soup" highlights the company's expansive food and snack offerings while maintaining its name recognition and reputation.

Pointers for Brands

A brand makeover can be a Herculean effort involving input from nearly every corner of a company's organization.

While the corporate and marketing teams most often lead the charge as the MVPs of a brand makeover, in-house and outside counsel can play a critical supporting role in ensuring the company's rebrand is an overall success.

One key legal consideration during a rebrand is the clearance and protection of the new trademarks proposed for use. It's one thing to pick a new name, but it's an entirely whole other megillah to secure the rights to this bright, shiny new concept — often requiring extensive behind-the-scenes strategizing.

To read the full story on Law360, click [here](#).