

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE FOR

Rolling Out a **New School Brand**






After months of planning, debate, rounds of revisions, internal reviews, and microscopic tweaks, your school's new brand ... is ... finally ... approved! Whew!

It was a lot of work, but the logo staring back at you from your screen looks great. It represents numerous hours of deep-dive conversations into your school's history, future, and aspirations. It's the product of creative collaboration on colors, fonts, taglines, icons ... even mascots. At last, the heavy lifting is done, and now you're excited about rolling out the new brand to your school family and the broader community.

And you want to get it right. After all, you're really proud of the creativity and thinking that went into the project. You know what this new brand can do for your school. This deserves more than an email announcement (Subject: Hey, we've got a new logo!). But you're in uncharted territory here. How do you roll out a new brand effectively?



If you've had this conversation with your team
(or perhaps just in your head), then you're in the right place.
Here are nine pointers to help your team plan and execute
a high-impact brand rollout.

Here's the rollout:

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What's your story?

01 Know your story.

It is important for leaders at your school to be able to tell the story behind the rebrand. (By “leaders,” we’re talking about your Head of School, principals, board members, marketing staff, admissions and development team members, influential teachers, coaches, etc.). They should be able to answer key questions, such as:

- **Why was the project important?**
- **What key concepts or ideas are built into the new brand?**
- **Who was involved in the development process?**
- **How does this new brand help us pursue the mission of the school?**
- **How does a new brand help make us more appealing to prospective families?**
- **When can we expect to see the new brand in use?**
- **How does the new brand impact things like uniforms, gym clothes, and other applications?**

In your next marketing meeting, set aside an hour to write out answers to these key questions. Don’t assign this project to one person. Huddle up and appoint a scribe to document your collaboration on-screen. Work through each question, refining your thoughts to a few key talking points. Don’t make your answers too complex or lengthy; your leadership doesn’t have any interest in memorizing a script. This is more of a reference guide for them to make sure they’re prepared for public presentations and hallway conversations.

Once your team has documented answers to these key questions, hold a brand rollout meeting with key influencers and give them printed copies of this Q&A document: **A Brand Rollout Fact Sheet**. Add the new logo(s) to the document, including any annotations for design elements that have specific meaning. They’ll be grateful for the thought you put into this, and you’ll have fewer fires to put out during the launch.

Document your brand standards.

If you engaged a professional firm to develop your brand, you should have received a Brand Standards Guide as part of your project deliverables. A Brand Standards Guide is a manual that documents the key components of your brand and outlines rules governing the use of your brand across a range of applications. While some people may view brand standards as restrictive, clear documentation of relevant guidelines can help your school develop and maintain a consistent, professional public image. Furthermore, brand standards can save your team countless hours of “figuring it out” on the fly. You don’t have to wonder which blue is the right blue, which logo to use, what a print piece should look like, or how email signatures should be styled.



A Brand Standards Guide (BSG) is essential for your brand rollout to make sure applications are correct and consistent from day one.

The key components of a Brand Standards Guide are:

- **The purpose of the BSG**
- **The school’s mission, vision, and values**
- **The full academic and athletic logos**
 - Descriptions of the various elements of the logos, including any stories, allusions, or embedded concepts
 - Identification of each font and color
- **Taglines**
- **Color palette**
 - Primary colors
 - Secondary/complementary colors
- **Documentation of acceptable use**
 - Color and grayscale
 - Icon usage (if applicable)
 - Spacing standards to avoid crowding the logo
 - Examples of incorrect applications
- **A list of various file types**
 - For commercial press
 - For in-office publication
 - For digital applications
- **Copywriting guidelines**
 - Voice — the personality of your brand
 - Tone — the position or point of view
 - Style — the grammar standards your brand follows (e.g., AP Style, Chicago Style, etc.)
- **Photo and video guidelines**
- **Documentation of specific applications; examples include:**
 - Signage
 - Email signatures
 - Business cards, letterhead, envelopes
 - Business forms
 - Social media graphics
 - Apparel (academic and athletic uniforms, hats, etc.)
 - Vehicle branding

Your BSG is a living document. Every time you add a new brand application, consider if it’s worth adding to your BSG. If you don’t have a Brand Standards Guide, a professional agency (such as [North Star Marketing](#)) can help you document your current applications and establish a foundational BSG your team can build on over time.

List and prioritize highly visible brand applications.

Now that your school has a shiny new logo, the old one has got to go. You probably started a list of brand applications back when you first ramped up the project, adding items that came to mind along the way. If not, here's a checklist of logo applications your team can use to get started:

- **Signage**
 - Off-campus directional
 - Entryway and monument
 - Visitor parking
 - Building/facility exteriors
 - Lobby/foyer
 - Internal wayfinding
 - Temporary signage templates
- **Print**
 - Business cards
 - Infopackets
 - Viewbooks
 - Overview brochures
 - Program sheets and flyers
 - Business forms and related documents
 - Student folders
- **Apparel**
 - Uniforms
 - Gym attire
 - Spiritwear (t-shirts, polos, hats, visors, etc.)
- **Logowares**
 - Pens, pencils
 - Mouse pads
 - Giveaways
 - Stickers
 - Window decals
 - Drinkware (cups, mugs, etc.)
 - Bags/totes
- **Digital**
 - Website
 - Social media platforms
 - Email signatures
 - E-newsletter templates
 - E-books
 - Landing pages
 - Admissions applications
 - Review sites
 - Google Maps
- **Athletics**
 - Field/court markings
 - Athletics uniforms and warm-ups
 - Cheerleading outfits
 - Mascot suits
- **Vehicles**
 - Buses, vans, and cars
 - Utility vehicles (trucks, golf carts, etc.)



As you can see, the list can get pretty long ... and expensive. Most schools can't afford to do a comprehensive changeover all at one time. So, where do you focus your time and budget? Start by ranking brand applications by visibility, effort, and cost. When possible, put specific dollar amounts next to each line item.

Here's a simple framework your team can use to organize your brand changeover priorities:

Category: Signage

Item	Description and scope (include photos when helpful)	Visibility	Effort	Cost (\$)	Priority/Timing
Off-campus directional		High	Medium	Medium	
Entryway and monument		High	Medium	High	
Visitor parking		High	Medium	Low	
Building/facility exteriors		High	Medium	Medium	
Lobby/foyer		High	Low	Low	
Internal wayfinding		High	High	High	
Temporary signage templates		High	Low	Low	



Yes, it's a lot of work, but don't be overwhelmed. Work through this list in your regular marketing meetings. By documenting your priorities, you'll be able to allocate budget, effort, and time effectively. Realistically, it may take you 12-24 months to fully work through the entire list.

Develop a communications plan.

In one of your planning meetings, set aside 90 minutes to develop a simple communications plan. Here is a framework for planning your communication strategy:

Who needs to know about the brand change?	What do they need to know?	When do they need to know?	Who should tell them?	What channel should we use?
Leadership Team	Brand Rollout Fact Sheet	During brand development process	Marketing Director	In-person meeting
Board of Directors	Brand Rollout Fact Sheet; Brand Launch event; how to help	During brand development process	Marketing Director, Head of School	In-person meeting
Key Influencers	Brand Rollout Fact Sheet; Brand Launch event; how to help	During brand launch planning	Marketing Director	In-person meeting, small group meetings
Students, Families, and Alumni				Email invitation to brand launch; newsletter announcements; in-person invitations, etc.
Prospective Families				
Vendors and Partners				
The Media				
The Broader Community				
Secretary of State				



As you think through your communications plan, particularly the timing of key communications, keep this simple statement in mind: "It would be unfortunate if _____ learned about this from _____." This guiding thought will help you sequence your communication to key audiences.



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Recruit key influencers to champion the rollout.

There are some people in your school community who have clout due to their role or title. There are some who have influence due to their tenure — a respected teacher who's been there for decades or an influential family who has had a student enrolled from preschool to alumni. There are some opinion leaders who just have big personalities and are involved in lots of organizations and activities at the school and in the community. You want all of these people to be champions for the new brand.

In your regular marketing meeting, set aside time to make a list of people you want to connect with one-on-one or in small group meetings.

The agenda for these preview conversations is simple and direct:



The school is launching a new brand (hopefully, they will have been included in the process)

- Here's why we decided to refresh the brand
- Here's the process we went through
- Here's the new brand



We're working on the rollout plan

- Date of changeover
- Scope of change (show priorities list)
- Date and overview of brand launch event



We need your help

- Be familiar with our talking points (share your Brand Rollout Fact Sheet)
- Be an advocate for the launch event, encourage people in your circles to attend
- Promote us through your social channels



Questions and clarification

- What questions do they have?
- Is anything unclear?
- Is there anything you think we should be considering in advance of the rollout?

Commit to a launch date.

Just like you can't "kinda go swimming," you can't kinda roll out a new brand. You need to commit to a changeover date and reverse engineer your rollout timeline from there.

For schools, there are a few natural changeover opportunities; these include:

- **The start of a new school year**
- **The start of a new calendar year**
- **Homecoming**
- **Major milestones** (15 years, 25 years, etc.)
- **Major events** (opening a new facility)
- **In conjunction with a capital campaign**

Brand transitions work best when they tie in with another major event or natural inflection point. You've already got peoples' attention; make the most of the opportunity by rolling out your brand in parallel.



A word of caution: summer is a terrible time to launch a brand. No one is paying attention to school news, and families and teachers alike are avoiding campus in favor of the beach or the mountains or travel abroad. If you're going to launch at the beginning of a new school year, wait until everyone is back, then hold your brand launch event.



Hold a brand launch event.

You've got one shot at rolling out your new brand. An email announcement with an attachment is not the way to go ...

To maximize the impact of your new brand rollout, get your entire school community together for a brand launch party. This can be either the sole focus of the event, or you can tie the event in with the opening of a new building or some other major celebration. But just be clear about the intended purpose: to tell the story of the new brand and unveil the logo.

So, what could this look like?

Here are a few ideas of what you could include in your brand launch:

- Heavy hors d'oeuvres (no need for a full meal); feed them well before the rollout
- A key influencer emcees the event, discussing the significance of the brand in the life of the school
- A few remarks from the Head of School
- A rollout video telling the story, unveiling the new brand
- Easels with print-outs of the logo (covered until the unveiling)
- Head of School following the video, speaking briefly to the rollout plan
- Bring out a big cake with the logo on it
- Coordinate changeover of social media and website graphics during the event
- Unveil new monument signage during the event

Other ideas:

- One school we worked with had their cheerleaders put together new cheers featuring the new name of the school; they performed the cheers as part of the rollout.
- Give away t-shirts and window decals featuring the new brand. It is important to get the name into the community as quickly as possible.
- Unveil an ice sculpture of the new logo. You're only going to do this once for this brand ... make it a big deal!
- Have a photographer document the event.
- Invite the press; send them photos of your event and a print-ready version of your new logo after the event.

From this point forward, you'll use the new brand. *Onward!*

Make new brand assets available for people who need access.

Getting this step right can save you heaps of time in the months and years ahead. Add your approved logo files and your Brand Standards Guide to a central, shared space so anyone who needs your logo can access it without changing it.



Your school's IT team may have a file sharing system already in place — something like Microsoft SharePoint or OneDrive. If you're not clear on this, ask your team about the best place to store and share your brand files.



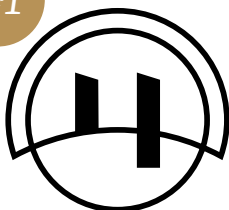
If you need to come up with a solution on your own, consider setting up Google Drive, Dropbox, or Box. Create folders for each type of logo file, using clear naming conventions (e.g. Color Logos for Digital Applications or Grayscale Logos for In-office Printing).



You may want to post a few logos on your website for use by the media. If so, include basic instructions for your brand application, including color and font standards.

The Evolution of a New Brand

STEP 1



Initial rough draft

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STEP 2



Refined concept

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STEP 3



Mastered icon



ACADEMICS that INSPIRE. FAITH that LEADS.



09

Get your brand into the community.

One of the most important factors in a successful brand launch is how quickly you get the new logo into the community.

There are four key components:



Digital: Make sure your website, social media, and review sites are updated with your new logo. Take advantage of features within specific social media platforms to draw attention to your brand (e.g. a custom Facebook Frame). Have your IT teams work through a process of standardizing email signatures. Don't underestimate the time it will take to do this thoroughly. Give outside vendors plenty of advance notice and provide a clear, written plan outlining the scope and timeline for each project.



Apparel: T-shirts are relatively inexpensive and a highly effective way to showcase your new brand. Recruit your students, families, faculty, and staff to be walking billboards for your new brand. Also, if your school uses uniforms, notify your vendors early to make sure your new logo (and colors, if applicable) are factored into the uniform catalog.



Vehicles: Think of how many cars come through your pickup line every day. The week following your brand rollout, have a few of your older student leaders hand out free stickers and magnets to parents coming through the drop-off and pickup line. They can even offer to remove the older sticker or magnet and replace it with a new one. This is a quick and low-cost way to get your new brand into the community.



Press: Write up a press release announcing the new brand, and distribute it by email to local newspapers, TV, and radio stations. Lead with a simple statement that explains that your school has a new (logo/name/mascot, etc.). Provide a few key points about the process and key concepts embedded in the brand; avoid the temptation to go deep, as the broader community doesn't care about the details. Include a print-ready, full-color version of the logo. This release should go out the day after your Brand Launch event, including photos of the launch party. Provide a brief history of the school, a few words from your Head of School about the new brand, and contact information for your Director of Marketing.

Ask donors to fund big-ticket changeovers.

You're going to build a lot of excitement and momentum as you roll out your new brand, especially when it starts showing up all over your school. But the changeover probably won't happen as quickly as you like, primarily due to budget constraints. There are those big-ticket items that just aren't in the budget — perhaps changing over the mascot on the gym floor or replacing the entryway sign. You cringe every time you walk by it or sit in the stands or leave campus.

Give your Development team specific messaging to keep your brand projects moving forward. "Hey, parent, we've worked really hard to stretch our budget to get this new brand implemented. We've made great progress, but we just don't have room in the budget to change out the logo on the gym floor. It would be really great if next season the logo on the floor matched the new logo on the warm-ups and uniforms. Would you consider taking on that fundraising project for us? We've got two quotes from vendors ranging from \$_____ to \$_____, based on the style we go with. Would that be a project you'd be interested in leading?"

"Hey, parent, we've worked really hard to stretch our budget to get this new brand implemented."

And just like that, your new brand has added value again.





Rally Your Team ... and Go for It!

Perhaps by now you're looking at your new brand with a little less enthusiasm. Don't feel overwhelmed! Just like your brand development process, a brand rollout is a team effort. So, if you're not already in the habit, commit to a standing weekly meeting with your marketing team (or project team), and work through this Brand Rollout Guide. You'll need 90 minutes each week to work on marketing initiatives throughout the brand launch. As you discuss your plans, commit your "next steps" to a [marketing calendar](#) that keeps your team on the same page.

And, for what it's worth, don't stop meeting after the brand launch. But that's another topic for another day ...

A photograph of a young child wearing a red helmet and a blue and red striped jacket, sitting inside a red rocket ship. The child is smiling and wearing sunglasses. The background is a blurred landscape with mountains and trees under a clear sky.

Ready to launch?



"The Definitive Guide for Rolling Out a New School Brand" was developed by Andy Lynch, President & CEO of North Star Marketing. To learn more about how North Star Marketing helps schools grow enrollment, visit www.NorthStarMarketing.com.