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Ritz-Carlton revamps and rebrands to prepare for future

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Exterior of Ritz-Carlton Boston

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company is rebranding itself with a newly designed logo and voice to be implemented across all its properties within a year.

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The organization, founded in Boston in 1983, is the parent of not just the Ritz-Carlton hotel brand but also golf clubs, high-end spas and meeting centers, a leadership center, residences and the Community Footprints charity, which focuses on relieving poverty and hunger and protecting the environment. The new logo and color, the first changes in the brand's history, aim to "clarify, simplify and amplify" the brand's identity for global consumers.

"The Ritz-Carlton has been continuously evolving and refining every aspect and touchpoint of the organization for the last 10 years," said Ed French, chief sales and marketing officer, Washington. "All the decisions made were led by extensive data from global customer research, a significant portion of this led by existing guests, as well as the new generation of luxury travelers.

"At this stage of the brand journey, we recognized it was time to pull forward our legacy

and make it more prominent, yet refined in our communications."

New blue

The announcement was made in part with a text-heavy video that briefly outlines the brand's reasoning and showcases its evolution. "The most iconic brands have unforgettable voices, distinctive, desirable and timeless," it begins. "We endeavored to design a refreshed, relevant brand voice that firmly positions us in the luxury tier."

Embedded Video: https://www.youtube.com/embed/7_uU2e2xEy4

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company launches new brand voice

"As a brand that aims to lead the way for luxury, we didn't wait for emphatic data to tell us there was a problem to fix," Mr. French said in a statement. "Instead, we took a leadership point of view and conducted global studies, not on where luxury has been, but where it is going – to shine a light for the others to follow."



New Ritz-Carlton logo and color

Ritz-Carlton has linked its decision to previous initiatives and decisions, from the removal of formal dining to the locations of newer hotels, and sees the rebranding as a natural extension of years of decision-making and efforts to provide consumers with the best possible experience.

In 2006, the flagship Ritz-Carlton Boston was sold to Taj Hotels, reopening as Taj Boston in January 2007, showing an early willingness to break ties with the past and look forward.

The changes show that the brand, while continuing to honor its legacy in its name and in holding onto the lion, crown and color blue despite a redesign, understands the importance of continuing to lead and build its legacy and reputation rather than relying exclusively on associations to the past.

Although rebranding can often catch consumers off-guard, Ritz-Carlton is pursuing the next generation of aspirational and luxury consumers who may not have not yet forged strong associations with the previous branding, and the changes have been made based on consumer feedback and continue to pay homage to the brand's past, which makes it less likely to alienate loyal consumers.



Ritz-Carlton old (left) and new (right)

By integrating the new logo into all its operations, Ritz-Carlton will reinforce its luxury identity across different sectors and touchpoints, uniting its spas, golf clubs and other endeavors under the same luxury umbrella associated with the hotel.

Out with the old

Although rebranding always comes as a surprise, Ritz-Carlton's history shows that it knows how to maintain consumer confidence.

According to a consumer satisfaction report by J.D. Power from July, hotels are leaving guests with less to complain about, leading to the highest all-time levels of consumer satisfaction. In the luxury category and across all price points, The Ritz-Carlton has the highest satisfaction index results, with 892 points against a luxury average of 857 ([see story](#)).

Brands in other sectors have also rebranded in an attempt to appeal to global consumers.

In January 2014, British fashion brand Beulah London enlisted global digital agency ATTIK to remake its corporate brand image and prepare the young label for global expansion.

Beulah selected ATTIK for its ability to communicate the many layers of a brand and its ability to operate globally. The brand's dual commitment to high-end fashion and raising awareness for human trafficking informed the reinvention ([see story](#)).

For Ritz-Carlton, clarifying, simplifying and amplifying is an extension of what it has done before.

"We have been very mindful of paying great homage to our valuable and iconic brand, and the first source of research came from the people who know us the best, our customers," Mr. French said. "They have always been instrumental in shaping the future of The Ritz-Carlton."

Final Take

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