

Online Video Case 2.1

ACCENTURE: The Accent Is in the Name

As of 2014, Accenture (www.accenture.com) is the largest consulting firm in the world and one of the largest computer services and software companies on the *Fortune* Global 500 list. It has more than 266,000 employees in fifty-four countries and revenues of \$27.9 billion in fiscal 2012. Through its network of businesses, the company enhances its consulting, technology, and outsourcing expertise through alliances, affiliated companies, venture capital, and other capabilities. Accenture delivers innovations that help clients across all industries quickly realize their visions and can quickly mobilize its broad and deep global resources to accelerate results for clients. The company has extensive experience in nineteen industry groups in key business areas, including customer relationship management, supply chain management, business strategy, technology, and outsourcing. Accenture's clients include eighty-nine of the *Fortune* Global 100 and more than three quarters of the *Fortune* Global 500.

Accenture was originally named Andersen Consulting and was created in 1989 as a part of Arthur Andersen. In 2000, Andersen Consulting won the right to divorce itself from Arthur Andersen after the parent company broke contractual agreements, moving into areas of service where Andersen Consulting was already an established leader. However, it then had to change its name. This was an extremely significant event, because Andersen Consulting had built up considerable brand equity in its name, partly by spending approximately \$7 billion over ten years on building the name. In addition, the new name would need to be trademarked in forty-seven countries. Thus, the name change became a top priority, and the company focused much of its time and effort on this task.

The first task was to pick a new name. The company challenged its employees to come up with suggestions for a new name by creating an internal contest, which resulted in a list of more than 2,500 entries. After extensive marketing research on various names, which included surveys of target customers, it decided to go with the name *Accenture*. Marketing research revealed that the "Acc" in the name connotes accomplishment and accessibility, and the name sounds like "adventure." The company settled on this name because it believed it conveyed the message that it was focused on the future. It also spent a considerable amount of time creating a new logo. The final version of the logo was the company's name accented with a greater than (>) symbol placed above the letter *t*, which it believed stressed its focus on the future.

Another task, which occurred simultaneously, was to get the word out and prepare the target market for the brand change. The company began running ads notifying everyone that its name would change at the beginning of 2001. Accenture has a well-defined group of companies that comprises the target market, and it had to focus its efforts on them. A teaser advertisement created by Young & Rubicam with the old signature torn through at the corner of the ad and typing in "Renamed. Redefined. Reborn 01.01.01" set the stage for the change. Marketing research revealed that 01.01.01, the launch date of the new brand, had a resonance with the computer industry, because 0 and 1 are the two digits of the binary world of computers.

Finally, on January 1, 2001, the company announced its new name to the world. The initial campaign illustrated the change by the slogan "Renamed. Redefined. Reborn." Accenture used this opportunity not only to present the new name, but also to sell its services and help people understand what it had to offer. In the end, Accenture spent a total of \$175 million to rebrand itself, but it did not stop there. In February it began a new campaign, titled "Now it gets interesting." This campaign took the perspective that despite all the incredible changes that have occurred recently due to technology, even more challenges lie ahead. The commercials showed how Accenture could help clients capitalize on these challenges. The success of this campaign was evidenced by the increased traffic on the company's website. This is very important to Accenture, because it believes that if it can get somebody to visit its site, it has a better opportunity to tell the whole story. Next

came the “I Am Your Idea” theme. This campaign was followed by “High Performance. Delivered,” which was still running in 2013. However, Tiger Woods was dropped due to his alleged infidelities.

Accenture has been successful in transferring the brand equity to its new name. Marketing research revealed that it has approximately 50 percent awareness with the public, which is essentially the same number it had under the old name. Accenture’s marketing goes far beyond the name, because it is constantly challenged as the product it offers changes.

Conclusion

The case describes the marketing research conducted by Andersen Consulting to change its name, while at the same time maintain the brand equity and the goodwill of its previous name. Andersen Consulting was able to successfully transition to a new name and a new identity, reflecting the new realities of the market and Accenture’s positioning in it. Finding a new name is only the beginning; repositioning a global brand today requires good marketing research, creative marketing, big budgets, and awareness of the next business trends. Such efforts will help Accenture to further strengthen the accent in its name by building brand equity.

Questions

1. Discuss the role of marketing research in helping Andersen Consulting select a new name (Accenture). If Accenture were to select a new name today, would social media research be helpful? If yes, how?
2. Define Accenture’s target market. Discuss the role of marketing research in helping Accenture understand the needs of its target customers.
3. Accenture would like to increase preference and loyalty to its services. Describe the management decision problem.
4. Define a suitable marketing research problem corresponding to the management decision problem that you identified in question 3.
5. Develop a graphical model explaining how a *Fortune* 500 firm would select a consulting organization.
6. Develop two research questions, each with two hypotheses, based on the marketing research problem you defined in question 4.



References

1. See www.accenture.com, accessed July 13, 2013.
2. Accenture. *Newsroom—Fact Sheet—Overview*, online at <http://newsroom.accenture.com/fact+sheet>, accessed July 13, 2013.