

Goodbye leaping tiger, hello Tigerair



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SINGAPORE - Singapore firms have been using their corporate logos as a tool to help reflect a new corporate image or a change in business direction.

The latest to jump on the bandwagon is Tiger Airways. Its leaping tiger, an icon of the budget carrier, will be history as the company rebrands itself and changes its name to Tigerair.

Along with the name change unveiled yesterday, the company will sport what it calls a "fresh and upbeat look" that "embodies its brand personality of (being) warm, passionate and genuine". The new logo has grey rounded-font typography, with orange accents.

Tigerair chief executive Koay Peng Yen said the new identity is timely, given the changes and new initiatives under way at the airline in the past six months.

These include providing travellers transiting in Singapore with a seamless transfer to other destinations in Tigerair's network, Mr Koay added.

Some brands here have also changed their logos in recent years. Super Group, famous for its instant-mix coffee, did a rebranding in January to embody the company's "positive outlook and attitude", said a spokesman.

Eng Wah Cinemas changed its name to WE Cinemas - with a logo change, too - as part of the Eng Wah Organisation's overall group rebranding in 2010 to Eng Wah Global. This was to consolidate its resources and reach out to a wider audience.

Marketing experts told My Paper that when a firm rebrands, it is sometimes a sign that its current strategy is not working.

It might also be that the firm wants to signal a change in its direction and how it wants to be perceived by customers.

Dr Seshan Ramaswami, an associate professor of marketing education at Singapore Management University, said the old Tigerair logo of an aggressive leaping tiger was "a little brash" and "in-your-face".

"(The new logo) signals a change from an aggressive emphasis on price alone to slowly developing other competitive advantages," Dr Ramaswami said.

He said that in Tigerair's "repositioning", the airline is considering other factors, such as its partnership with Virgin and the offer of better customer service. Tigerair recently sold a 60 per cent stake in its Australian subsidiary to Virgin Australia.

Mr Samir Dixit, managing director for the Asia-Pacific at Brand Finance, said that when an airline goes through a rebranding of this scale, the costs can run up to several millions.

On Tigerair's new logo, he said: "This looks to be an attempt to erase the past and start afresh."

Associate Professor Sharon Ng, from Nanyang Business School's division of marketing and international business, said companies also rebrand to appeal to the tastes of today's consumers, who are after a more "minimalistic" look and feel.

Beyond the cosmetic changes in Tigerair's new logo, Mr Dixit said it is "wait-and-watch" now to see what "fundamental shifts" the company has made to shape customers' experiences.