



Jim Parker, Jan 26, 2024

Rebranding a hospice company following a merger or acquisition is a more complex process than it may seem at first blush.

While consolidation slowed in 2023, many industry observers expect a rebound in 2024, though perhaps not to the [record-breaking levels](#) seen in 2021. And although not all acquired companies rebrand, many do in order to create a unified identity or reflect a broader suite of services.

For rebranding organizations, the process likely has to begin with a little soul searching, according to Stan Massey, senior partner at Transcend Strategy Group.

“A lot of times with mergers and acquisitions, two cultures are coming together. Even if they have a lot in common, there’s a lot of legwork that needs to be done to really get the internal team on board with the effort,” Massey told Hospice News. “So before we even start talking about brand names and things that are more outward facing, they have to come to terms on what they want their combined culture, mission, vision and values to be.”

A best practice for these providers is to establish an internal brand team to guide the process, according to Massey. This should include a cross-section of the organization’s employees that focuses first on unifying the company’s identity internally before making public-facing changes, such as new logos or an updated website. This internal legwork is not a simple, cosmetic process. It includes a number of operational considerations that range from establishing a common electronic medical record system and other technology platforms, ensuring vendors can supply a company’s larger, post-acquisition workforce and extensive financial diligence, according to Tony Kudner, chief strategy officer for Transcend.

Kudner has experienced this process firsthand. Prior to his role at Transcend, he was senior vice president of marketing and communications for AccentCare, which merged with Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care in 2021. Later, the company [unified](#) all of its brands under the AccentCare name, including Seasons.

“A rebrand born of a merger is different than a rebrand born of a legacy organization wanting to update to better fit where the organization has grown to,” Kudner told Hospice News. “And the difference between the two is largely in behind-the-scenes logistics.”

This process can be as expensive as it is time-consuming, with costs possibly rising into the six figures, Kudner said.

A rising number of hospices have undergone name changes in recent years, prompting many to consider the elements of an effective rebranding strategy.

As hospices nationwide develop new services to engage patients further upstream, some are rebranding to reflect their expanded scope and to avoid the word “hospice” in their company.

Hospices should avoid brand names that are too generic or that focus on one particular service line or portion of their geographic footprint. These types of brands can inadvertently silo an organization that serves a broader area and operates a range of business lines, according to Massey.

This can also cause consumers and referral partners to confuse your company with similar sounding names, he said.

Considerations like these have prompted many operators to give their companies’ brands a facelift. Case in point, Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) [became](#) VNS Health to represent an expanded footprint and scope of services.

California-based Hospice by the Bay has also [rebranded](#) as By the Bay Health to recognize that it now offers more services than end-of-life care, including palliative care, comfort care, grief counseling, pediatric care, and skilled home health care as well as hospice services.

In Florida, Alivia Care [emerged in 2020](#) when Community Hospice & Palliative Care rebranded into a larger company with a wider range of services. Since then, launching new programs and pursuing affiliations have been priorities for the organization, including home health and PACE.

Hospice of Southwest Michigan in 2022 [rebranded](#) as Centrica Care Navigators. Established 40 years ago solely as a hospice, the organization now provides palliative care and adult day care.

“It’s all about continuity and cohesion, so when you are forming a new organization that’s bigger and stronger, by merging two or more organizations, that is a really good time to look at your branding,” Massey said. “You don’t have to swallow the elephant whole, all at the same time, you can be very smart in how you phase in a new brand, all the while reminding all of your audiences that and that you changed your name because you’re able to do more for your patients.”

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