



New Brand Identity – Q&As for Members

Q: What is a 'brand' – just a logo?

A: Our brand is not just a logo, it is how we are known - the sum of everything we do and how we present ourselves. It is how we represent the Royal British Legion visually, verbally and in written form and reflects the charity's values. This includes our colour palette, the types of and ways in which we use images and our tone of voice in how we communicate both internally and externally, as well as our logo and the two-petal Poppy.

Q: Why is a brand so important?

A: Branding is all about who we are. It is important because it builds emotional connections, makes a memorable impression on people, and allows them to know what to expect from our organisation. Our brand is built to be a true representation of who we are, and how we wish to be perceived. With a clear brand identity, we give people a great experience and they are more likely to recommend us to others, increasing our reach.

Q: Why is it crucial to protect our brand?

A: Brand is one of our biggest assets. Failure to protect it may reduce its value and could damage our reputation. If other companies or organisations use our brand on their own products or services they may be attracting new customers, increasing their profit as a result, but diminishing our impact at the same time. That is why our brand usage must be carefully managed and appropriate agreements must be signed if a third party wishes to use our logo.

Q: Why is it important to follow the brand guidelines?

A: Brand guidelines are the rules on how to use our brand's elements. They are a valuable tool to keep our brand cohesive and consistent, allowing it to be more immediately identified and recognised by our audience. By implementing brand guidelines we help build a strong image of our organisation and we make it easier to maintain the quality and integrity of this image, developing trust amongst our audiences. Consistency also allows our brand to appear more professional and reliable.

Q: What is the problem with our current brand?

A: There are a number of issues with the current brand:

- **Confusion:** There are over 36 different logos used by RBL and associated with RBL. Some are core brands of vital importance, some are products and services that we offer, some represent joint ventures, some have no link to RBL whatsoever. This causes confusion, the logos do not add value to each other and worst of all, some are taking equity away from RBL. We require a bold



single-minded brand that can stretch across our full portfolio.

- **Cost:** Creation and management of new sub-brands is both costly and unnecessary. The sub-brands don't reinforce each other resulting in reduced visual consistency and risk diluting the RBL brand. This reduces the impact, clarity and value of the Royal British Legion brand.
- **Attribution:** Our current logo does not clearly communicate who we are to people who are not close to our cause. In 2018, 61% recognised the RBL logo with the wording blurred, but only 39% correctly attributed it to the Legion. And for our landmark fundraising event, the Poppy Appeal, less than 50% of people associated this with the Royal British Legion (*Source: 2018 NFP Synergy survey*).

A vital factor is that our current brand is not fit for purpose for a digital world – the importance of which has become even more apparent this year. From October 2019 to November 2020, 6.3 million users came to our website: 3.6 million of those came through mobile, while 685k were tablet users. Our current logo becomes illegible when used on these channels at a smaller size. This is also a problem for the membership cards.

Q: Why are we introducing the new brand identity now?

A: Covid-19 has made our work more vital than ever. The pandemic has placed further emphasis on the need to support our Armed Forces community and their families, therefore the need to be able to present the organisation clearly and consistently across our channels has never been greater. The entire process began in February 2017, with a review of how we present ourselves and protect the Royal British Legion brand. The final brand identity was due to be introduced in June 2020, however this was put on hold whilst we took the time to understand what implications the Covid-19 pandemic would have for the project whilst preparations continued in the background.

Q: Why do we need a new brand identity?

A: The Royal British Legion is constantly evolving and looking for ways to make sure we best support the Armed Forces community. The RBL has a new strategy and as we celebrate our centenary and look to the next 100 years, we've got a new brand that's modern, whilst keeping the poppy at our heart. Everything we do is about creating better futures for our Armed Forces community and their families and we need one clear brand identity to support that ambition. To make sure we keep gaining support from new audiences, we need people to understand what we do. Being able to present the organisation through a clear and consistent visual and verbal identity across all different media, particularly digital, is an important part of that. Our new brand can be easily seen and understood across digital and print channels, making it easier for our customers to find us and understand what we have to offer – whether they need access to our services and support or want to support our work.

We currently have over 30 different sub-brands and are inconsistent in the way we present ourselves across our materials and buildings, which is confusing for people.

A need for a refreshed brand was highlighted in figures from past Brand research. Comprehension



around our Welfare role with the general public in 2018 was at 43% (and dropping year-on-year), and 31% of the Armed Forces community couldn't tell you how RBL could help them (*Sources: 2018 NFP Synergy survey; Veterans Gateway PR survey*).

So, we need a new, clearer brand identity that will be used consistently across all products and communications to help people recognise the Royal British Legion and our work.

Q: How much has it cost?

A: In order to increase awareness around our welfare work, and encourage more members of the Armed Forces community to come to us for help in the long term, an investment of £100,752 (including VAT) was spent across 2018 – 2019 to create a clear and consistent brand that will support the organisation for many years to come.

The cost covers more than a new logo. It covers the iterative process of a new brand identity over a two-year period including stakeholder engagement, research and design work, development of the logo and brand assets, and fulfilling trademark requirements. The new identity will change how we design all of our materials and assets and includes the type of language we use to communicate.

Q: Isn't the money better spent on beneficiaries?

A: Creating a new identity for the Royal British Legion is fundamental in helping us reach and support more beneficiaries in the future. By having a clear and consistent brand, we will increase awareness around the welfare work we do. This will encourage more members of the Armed Forces community to come to us for help in the long term. Attribution to the RBL for all our work will also help attract more support and drive donations, leading to more funds to spend on beneficiaries in the long term.

Q: Who was consulted in the process?

A: The process of creating the new brand identity has been hugely collaborative, with invaluable input from Royal British Legion staff, members, volunteers, beneficiaries, members of the Armed Forces, and the public.

A thorough audit was conducted of RBL assets including across 80 websites, print materials, our Pop Ins centres and Care Homes. Interviews were conducted with stakeholders including our Executive Board, Board of Trustees, MOD, and other charities in our group - the National Memorial Arboretum and Poppyscotland.

Initial workshops including members were held in August 2017 with results shared with County Chairs prior to creative development. In June 2018 further creative research was conducted into five shortlisted logos with a further 16 focus groups across London, Birmingham, Swindon, Plymouth, Leeds, Colchester.

This process was repeated when it came down to final logo research in December 2018. Members



were included in focus groups across London, Birmingham, Plymouth, Leeds, Colchester. The new visual identity was taken to the Membership Council in its development stage. As a result, we went back into development, further exploring different colours and fonts, to come to the visual identity we have today. An update was shared at Annual Conference in May 2019 before the Board of Trustees approved the new identity in June 2019.

At all stages of the project, the need for this work has been clearly understood and the proposed visual identity has been enthusiastically received. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your input and support throughout the process, and as we embark on launch and rollout.

Q: What inspired the new logo?

A: To face the challenges in our next chapter, we need a modern brand that works well across all products, communications and channels. This is especially true for digital media, which allows us to effectively and cost-efficiently reach more people – whether existing or new customers. So, we need to have an identity that is fit for the future, easily recognised and understood, and has impact across all our uses.

Yet we wanted to ensure we remain true to who we are and so wanted to keep the Poppy at the heart. The logo is contemporary and timeless, based on English typographic letterforms that evoke heritage, tradition and unity. The lettering beneath is inspired by the grave of the Unknown Warrior at Westminster Abbey.

We feel our new logo balances well between embracing the future by being adaptable and modern, whilst maintaining and celebrating our deeply valued heritage.

Q: What are the key organisational needs that this new brand must address?

A: There are a number of needs the new brand addresses:

Recognisable: We need a clear identity that effectively communicates who we are and represents the work that we do.

Modern: We need a visual identity that works effectively in digital spaces including mobile.

Flexible: We need one logo that can work with different programmes and initiatives rather than creating lots of new logos, which can dilute the brand and cause confusion.

Practical: We need a logo that is legible and allows us to be consistent across the organisation, so we can make the most of economies of scale and opportunities to work more efficiently.

Q: How does the new brand fit in with the Royal British Legion's centenary?

A: The new brand identity is an important aspect of the Royal British Legion strategy as we celebrate our centenary and look to the future. To achieve our strategic aims, we need one



consistent and clear brand that helps our customers to easily find us, understand who we are and what we do. The new brand will be introduced early in the RBL's centenary year, however, it is not a commemorative brand and will be used for years to come.

Q: Are we losing the 'The' of 'The Royal British Legion'?

A: With the launch of the new brand we are now the Royal British Legion, so when our name is written out in full you don't need to capitalise 'the' unless it is at the beginning of a sentence. Research has shown that people internally and externally felt that the name 'The Royal British Legion' was too long, and that the 'The' was unnecessary. By losing it from the logo, our brand will have more flexibility and our logo is able to be clearer.

Q: What will the new brand mean for me?

A: You are encouraged to familiarise yourself with the new brand and start using it when communicating internally and externally. This doesn't mean throwing away any current materials that are not in the new brand, but gradually as they are used up, you should look to produce them in the new visual identity. There will be new tools at your disposal to help you use the brand effectively, including webinars, access to assets, templates and guidance on how to use the new brand correctly. You can find this at rbl.org.uk/membersbrandpage

Q: What does this mean for the Membership crest?

A: The Membership crest is not changing. There will be some guidance on how it is positioned in relation to the new logo, which will be included in the guidance available from 26 January. The crest can continue to be used on headed paper and publications as it has previously.

Q: Will 'LIVE ON' continue to be used?

A: 'LIVE ON' was a support line that was used with the old brand identity; we have no plans to use it at this time. Campaigns and support lines will be created with our new brand in the future.

Q: Where can I access new brand assets?

A: Brand guidelines and other assets will be available on the Membership Administration Portal, on the RBL website at rbl.org.uk/membersbrandpage or from your Membership Support Officer.

Q: Will having a new brand waste current stock of materials?

A: No, the Royal British Legion is taking a 'no waste' approach to the rollout of the new brand, meaning people should use up any existing materials with the current brand first, before creating new materials in the new brand. This is to ensure that the rollout of the new brand is done in a cost-effective way; it's vital we do not waste charity money or materials. This of course means that the

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rollout of the new brand is a long-term approach.

Q: Can we create new assets using the new brand?

A: We encourage branches to use readily available assets and templates. If there is a need for a new design, this must be approved by the Brand team before any assets are produced. We will inform you of the approval process in due course.

Thank you for your support as we introduce the new brand identity.