

**A consumer products guru offers advice
on how to rebuild a mature (baby) brand**

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Removing the image of a Caucasian baby and replacing it with a heart was the key to revitalizing Pampers diapers, which is often found on lists of the world's most beloved brands.

Using the heart symbol – which symbolizes the mother/baby relationship – has repositioned the Procter and Gamble brand as a total baby care business. And it has allowed the Pampers name to be used on other products, such as a new line of baby apparel and Bibsters, a new line of disposable bibs that P&G has launched in the United States.

So say Cincinnati-based Tom Dierking, global associate design director for Procter & Gamble and Jerome Kathman, president and CEO of the international design firm and P&G client, Libby Perszyk Kathman. They were speaking this week in Montreal at the 13th International Corporate/Brand Identity Conference of the Boston-based Design Management Institute.

Launched in 1961, the multi-billion dollar brand had different looks worldwide by the 1990s, as design decisions were often made by local management. “We weren't managing three-to-five-year planning,” Dierking says. The decision was made that the brand needed a global standard – and that was achieved by 1997, Kathman says. But that wasn't enough, he says.

P&G staffers went world-wide interviewing consumers, visiting pharmacies and ma and pa shops, and came to the realization the baby image on the brand “was not an equity,” and was contributing to the brand's success. Kathman says. “Why keep the passenger, when you need drivers?”

The baby was replaced by the heart as part of a mission to think baby care, not diapers, he says, and to think brand identity, not packaging. The new brand expresses joy and warmth and great empathy, and fits an era in which major corporations are trying to act more folksy.

“The newly empowered consumer expects more from brands,” says Dierking, adding that P&G is sharing its knowledge about babies and developing one-on-one relationships with parents via pampers.com, “an amazing repository of information.”