After 40 years, Coldwell Banker begins rolling out a new logo and branding

In the four months since storied residential real estate brokerage Coldwell Banker announced in March 2019 at its parent company Realogy's RGX conference that it was changing its venerable 40-year-old logo — from the recognizable interlocked CB in a square and full name to a new curvier, interlocked CB with no square and a new "North Star" — the company has been conducting extensive testing on the move.

Tons of agent feedback was collected, and the new imagery was printed onto 250 yard signs, which were then set up in the lobby of Coldwell Banker's offices.

David Marine

Coldwell Banker chief marketing officer David Marine even planted a new yard sign in his own front yard as a test, though he eventually removed it when his neighbors mistakenly thought he was moving.

Marine told Inman Friday that the response from all of these efforts has been overwhelmingly positive.

"There is a lot of passion and enthusiasm about what people feel about our brand," Marine said.

But the real test is only now just beginning: As of Friday, Coldwell Banker has begun rolling out its new "North Star" branding in a series of a few test markets.

The company-owned NRT Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Madison, New Jersey, is serving as the first beta market and was using the new branding as of Friday.

New (left) and old (right) Coldwell Banker logos side-by-side. Credit: Coldwell Banker

Other NRT-owned and franchise Coldwell Banker offices in Washington, D.C., Plainfield, Illinois, and South Carolina will follow in the coming months. (NRT is the brokerage owning and operating subsidiary of Realogy, the parent company that owns both NRT and the Coldwell Banker franchise brand).

In each case, the local offices will among other things get to choose from five yard signs that display different variations of the new branding. Marine said that different offices have tended to prefer different versions of the branding, but they have all been encouraged to order multiple yard sign variations in order to see how well the designs work in the field.

Five yard sign designs that Coldwell Banker is currently testing in a handful of markets. Credit: Coldwell Banker

The South Carolina test, which involves franchise Coldwell Banker Caine and will begin in August, will also involve a full company rebrand. That means the new logo will be adopted at every level of the business, rather than just on yard signs.

GUIDING YOU HOME SINCE
1906
45
ICED COFFEE

Coldwell Banker's new branding on an office. Credit: Coldwell Banker

Marine said that test will be the first to see an entire Coldwell Banker company adopt the new branding across its entire business.

The goal from these various tests will be to collect feedback. Marine explained that the company will gather input from both agents and consumers who interact with the new imagery. And while Marine does not anticipate future tweaks to the new logo design itself, the number of available yard signs could ultimately change or be whittled down.

The logo as it appears today also includes some minor revisions from what the company unveiled during its gathering with other Realogy brands at the RGX conference back in March. During that initial announcement, the logo was presented simply as dark blue lettering on a white background.

At the time, Coldwell Banker described the new logo as "clean and simple," "elegant" and "modern."

Coldwell Banker’s logo, as of March. Credit: Coldwell Banker

The company also said that it wanted to refresh its branding because, among other reasons, the old logo was perceived as outdated.

In addition, Coldwell Banker believed the rectangular shape of the old logo no longer worked well in a world where most people interact with the real estate industry on their vertically oriented cellphone screens.

But Friday, Marine said that some early feedback suggested the initial design “felt like it was floating and it wasn’t fully formed.”

As a result, the design the company is testing now includes a blue box and a white rectangle.

Marine described the new elements as the image’s “crown molding.”

The latest version of Coldwell Banker’s new logo. Credit: Coldwell Banker.

Following the tests this summer, Coldwell Banker plans to debut final branding standards during a leadership summit in September. Then, a company-wide rollout will begin in January 2020, though individual offices and franchisees will have as much as two years to gradually adopt the new imagery.

Both independent franchises and NRT-owned brokerages operate under the Coldwell Banker banner. In a fact sheet on its franchises, the company states that it has “92,000 agents spanning 47 countries.” The entire Coldwell Banker network also includes 3,000 offices.

Coldwell Banker’s NRT-owned brokerages also operate in 29 states, as well as Washington, D.C.

And while it could be months or years before many of these thousands of agents end up actually using the new branding, Marine said that thus far many company insiders have been champing at

the bit.

“So far, 100 percent of the feedback has been, ‘can I get access to this sooner,’” he explained.

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