

Extreme Brand Makeover: WCTC Becomes Solarus

The company now called Solarus used to be known as Wood County Telephone Company, a brand that had existed for nearly a hundred years. The company also went by WCTC, but neither name was an appropriate moniker in the early 21st century. By then, what had been a local telephone company was also a provider of digital TV, unlimited long distance calling, and Internet service – and was expanding statewide. The company had simply outgrown its name.

- GOAL** To re-brand the company to fit its changing product offerings and new geographic and demographic target markets. As the company’s current financial heart remains in and around Wood County, the transition would need to be handled with tact. This was an important consideration. Indeed, despite the clear need for change, the company’s board of directors remained reluctant when the process started.
- EXECUTION** An integrated re-branding effort began with our brand discovery process. The results led to the development of, in Phase 1, the new name, logo, and positioning statement: **WATCH WITH US. TALK WITH US. SURF WITH US.** We utilized focus group research and other research to assist in their development. Once these elements were determined, Phase 2 involved assisting top level management and the head of marketing in making the case for change to other board members through a convincing PowerPoint presentation. Phase 3 was an internal launch for the general employee population consisting of special events and the distribution of “elevator speeches” that would help employees become ambassadors for the new brand. Phase 4 was the public launch: a multimedia surge of PR and TV, radio, print, outdoor, direct mail, signage, and online advertising.
- RESULTS** The transition of WCTC to Solarus went smoothly in their local markets. Some of the promotional elements in the advertising executions resulted in very high response rates. Once the new name was established, we helped Solarus successfully expand beyond Wisconsin Rapids.

