

Case Study

National Automotive Aftermarket Wholesale Distributor Branding

Brand is not what you say in a campaign, it's what you prove in a crisis. This work showed that clarity and trust can scale, even through bankruptcy.

The Challenge

A leading national distributor faced seismic disruption: new C-suite and ownership, M&A activity, dispersed workforce, two bankruptcy filings, and multiple leadership transitions. Brand and communications had historically been transactional, not strategic, leaving trust fragile and clarity fractured across stakeholders.

The Transformation

With no brand or communications foundation, the function was built from the ground up and scaled into a resilient engine. It proved its value by sustaining trust and alignment not only during bankruptcy and disruption but also through the periods of stability in between.

The Outcomes

- **Brand Awareness:** +34 points (54% → 88%)
- **Brand Preference:** +13 points (18% → 31%)
- **Reputation:** 11 national awards in a single year, including recognition for transformation and workplace culture
- **Trust:** Sustained Net Promoter Score of 40 through disruption; 70%+ employee open rate on critical comms
- **Digital Presence:** Website traffic scaled 250K→1M+; 200+ top-10 keyword rankings; 20% YoY social growth and 1.5M+ impressions

The Approach

Architected and scaled a modern brand and communications function capable of withstanding disruption. Using a clarity-first, signal-over-noise philosophy, we established an integrated powerhouse spanning:

- Brand architecture, executive visibility, and internal channels
- Creative services, digital reputation, and social media strategies
- Crisis communications and issues management
- Metrics and foresight practices to shift communications from “support” to critical infrastructure and leadership strategy

Why It Matters

Clarity is not a luxury, it is competitive advantage. By elevating communications to a leadership function, organizations can build reputational capital that carries them through crisis and positions them for long-term growth.

The Signals Difference

Alignment, fragile trust into measurable reputation, short-term survival into long-term resilience.

When noise was everywhere from markets, media, and leadership change, we built signals strong enough to cut through and keep people aligned.