

Kyndryl

Building a Service Brand with Heart for the World's Largest Start-Up Company



Summary

In November 2021, the newly independent Kyndryl was formed after being spun-out from a legacy IT organization. On day one, Kyndryl became one of the largest IT services companies in the world with a global employee base of almost 90,000 professionals servicing over 4,000 industry-leading customers globally.

The challenge Kyndryl faced was to build a new brand at scale, while keeping the mission-critical operations of existing customers running, during a pandemic and the Great Resignation. A new culture and identity had to be created, one that would set Kyndryl apart from its historic origins and the competition. The brand had to be inspiring and energizing for all employees, and it had to convey confidence and credibility with customers.

From the very beginning, brand was seen as a foundational element of the company. A curated set of brand assets were developed that would inform employees about Kyndryl's purpose and how it would show up differently than the previous organization.

The Name

The word "Kyndryl" combines the words kinship and tendril. Together, it represents the core of Kyndryl's purpose – to build strong relationships with their employees, their communities, and their customers, and to work towards growth and progress in all that they do, together.

Brand Strategy

The components of the brand strategy are the brand core – brand purpose and idea, brand beliefs, and brand narrative. The strategy drives the Kyndryl brand identity and how they engage with the world.

Brand Elements

Kyndryl's colors, typography, patterns, and photography style are key parts of the brand's unique visual identity. The signature brand color – Warm Red – sets them apart in a technology industry swimming in blue. The brand imagery is full of greenery, evoking growth and vitality.

As a services company, the employee is how a customer experiences Kyndryl, therefore it was critical to create a positive emotional connection between employee and brand. The employee experience was the focus of Kyndryl's brand-building activities.

- Employee received "Kinship Kits" on their first day, with a welcome letter from the CEO and branded merchandise.
- A tree was planted for each employee, in recognition that employees are the roots of the new company.
- Kyndryl social media "Meet the Kyndryls" campaign features employees from around the world and what they do at Kyndryl, highlighting their expertise.
- The day Kyndryl listed on the NYSE, all employees were recognized on the Kyndryl social media post "Network of Gratitude", which encouraged employees to thank the people that helped them get to launch day.

Creating a new corporate culture at Kyndryl was necessary to differentiate the company from its past and move it forward into the future. A fresh, positive culture would help attract top talent in a very competitive market and retain the rockstars already there.

- A 3-day digital "Culture Jam" invited all employees to share their ideas on culture, values, and behaviors.
- "The Kyndryl Way" was developed, a simple framework that clearly identifies the behaviors Kyndryls will lean into.
- Local community tree planting events brought employees together, reinforcing that service, community and sustainability are tenets of the brand.

Kyndryl employees are excited to be a part of this unique moment, and it's important to channel their energy in ways that build the brand up, not tear it down. Some of the initial lessons learned:

- Develop branded merchandise and digital assets so everyone can feel like they are part of the team.
- Create social moments that are easy to participate in authentically.
- Build reusable templates and frameworks to help people stay "on brand".
- Communicate and educate. Repeatedly.

The results of the work done to establish the brand with the employees paid off during our launch:

- Online Share of Voice +15pts
- Net Sentiment +10pts
- Visits to Kyndryl.com +75% daily views
- Employee participation of NYSE launch +30,000
- Global Media Coverage 95% positive sentiment

The creation of a company of size and scale such as Kyndryl is rare. The COVID pandemic and the Great Resignation changed the game, and Kyndryl had to write a whole new brand playbook. The launch of Kyndryl will be a case study on brand building for the digital era.