

When a Rebrand is More Than a Rebrand

Most of the time, a rebrand is a way of refreshing a corporate image - like throwing a new coat of paint on the tired, old house to give it a more modern, up-to-date feel. Sometimes though, a rebrand means gutting the old house to rebuild something completely new.

When Alberta One-Call rebranded in 2012, we used that new coat of paint to update our look and to draw attention to a new call to action - "Click Before You Dig". We wanted to shift the conversation away from the phone, but no one was ready to walk away from the equity built into almost 30 years of messaging. We needed stakeholders to recognize the old 'One Call' name and the familiar 'Call Before You Dig' brand. So, we put new paint on the old familiar frame.

We managed to get almost 10 good years out of that 2012 paint job. We successfully changed the conversation, and now over 85% of all locate requests in Alberta are placed online. Mission accomplished.

With the unification of Alberta One-Call, Where's the Line and the Alberta Common Ground Alliance, we recognized the opportunity for real change. It was time not just to re-think how we process locate requests, but to re-think our role in damage prevention. We have always been much more than our contact centre. We are enhanced member services, advocates, educators, promoters, communicators, and participants at the table for best practices, industry standards, regulation, and legislation. These vital activities have been going on in the back rooms of our old house for forty years. It is time to open the floor plan to let the light shine on every aspect of our involvement in damage prevention. Not just open it up but make the room bigger so every stakeholder has space for a seat at the table.

With the creation of Utility Safety Partners, we are positioning ourselves to be a part of great changes and improvements in our industry. When we started the rebranding journey, we interviewed stakeholders in the damage prevention industry about who they thought we were, and who they wanted us to be once we unified with the ABCGA. From those interviews, we came away with a vision of a new kind of damage prevention organization, where safety was the priority, and more stakeholders could have a voice in the conversation. We identified the values this new organization needed to have:

- Safety is always first. If people are safe, they keep utilities safe.
- Transparency. We must be an open book to build trust.
- Inclusion and collaboration. Every stakeholder's voice is valuable. Stronger together.
- Empathy. No one wants to be unsafe or damage a utility. We are here to help each other reach a common goal.

That is why changing from ABCGA/AOC/WTL to Utility Safety Partners is more than just a rebrand. It is a new identity. A renewed purpose. A new chapter in our organization's 38-year history. A new house. Come on in and look around. The coffee is on and you are invited to join us at the table.

Sher Kirk – Operations Director, Utility Safety Partners (operated by Alberta One-Call Corporation)