

# Pursuit's David Barry Led Brand Transformation from the Inside Out

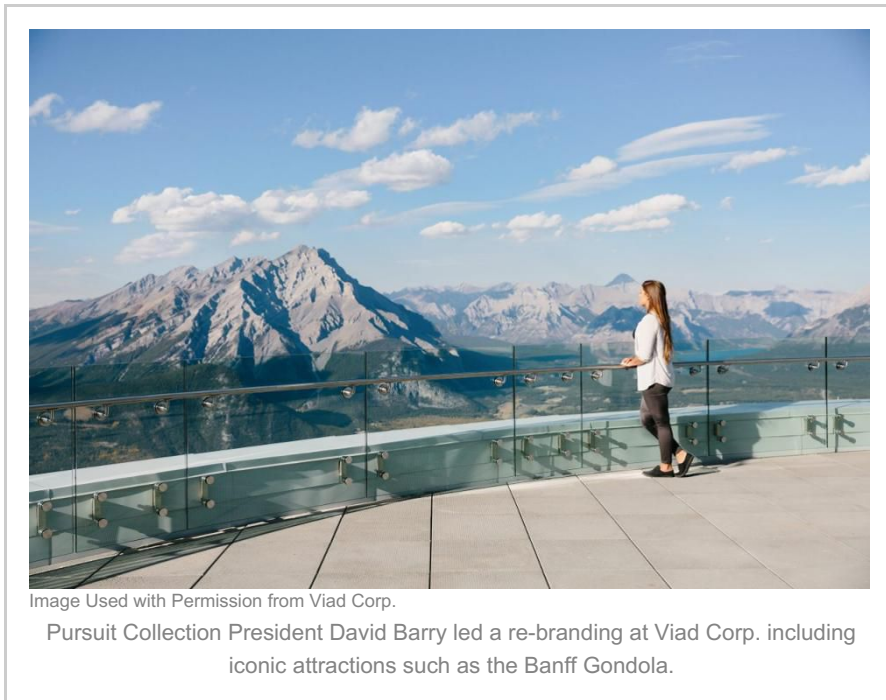
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When Viad Corp.'s Travel and Recreation Group undertook a re-branding in 2016, there were several objectives for the transformation including identifying a new name. Instead of delegating the undertaking to the marketing department, as most organizational leaders would, President David Barry believed the most fundamental element of the transformation was employee engagement with the brand. So he personally led the organization through an inside-out approach to brand-building and successfully executed the re-brand.



Viad had acquired seven companies in six years, each with different business units and brands and names, so Barry's underlying challenge was to unite and align all the entities. A new brand identity was needed to stretch across geographies, from Alaska to Western Canada and Montana. It also needed to apply to the wide range of venues in the company's expanded portfolio of businesses, including hotels, tourist attractions, and airport shuttles. The new brand name they adopted is Pursuit to represent the drive for "the extraordinary journey of life" that unifies all the experiences the company provides. They selected the name after confirming it applies in multiple regions and languages and resonates with their range of guests.

Barry knew that establishing a unifying connection among all Pursuit employees was the most

important requirement for the new brand. He told me in an interview, "Your brand has to resonate; it has to be real; it has to be something people believe in. And then we work hard to deliver it." In fact, he observed that "where cultures fail is where there isn't the connectivity between brand and culture." So he ensured that the re-branding included internally-directed efforts in addition to changes to the company's external image. Although Mark Hendrikse, the company's marketing vice president, assumed responsibility for many of the re-branding initiatives and tactics, he credits Barry with being the "chief architect" of the transformation.

Barry and his team undertook an inside-out approach to establishing their new brand identity by articulating newly inspired cultural foundations for the organization: mission, vision, and values. They following the philosophy that Stan Slap, bestselling author of books on culture, describes by saying "you can't sell it outside if you can't sell it inside," and considered how the how these cultural foundations could apply to employees as well as customers.

They wanted to align and integrate the two groups, so for example, the new mission reads, "To connect guests and staff to iconic places through unforgettable, inspiring experiences." And they developed universal core values such as "Honoring place," which references the respect for the locations they operate in that customers and employees share.

They also ensured that employees understood and embraced the updated mission, vision, and values. They conducted video conference calls with all the company's business units to discuss them and proceeded only after they got a thumbs-up. And then Hendriske and his colleagues went out into the field and conducted brand engagement sessions at all properties to ensure every employee had the opportunity to learn about and experience the new direction personally.