

Answers

A) Match the phrases to the definitions

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

To hone/refine	to alter	to revamp	to overhaul
To get some pushback	to cling to	to be indifferent towards	to gauge
To win over	to be receptive to	to test the waters	to embrace

1. To have no particular interest in something, to neither be for or against something:
to be indifferent towards

*"Data shows that consumers are fairly **indifferent towards** the improvements that we have made to our product."*

2. To accept and welcome something: **to embrace**

*"We need to **embrace** the changes in the market and use them to our advantage."*

3. To change a whole system or process completely: **to overhaul**

*"The government have decided to **overhaul** the whole election process, which has caused mass protests across the country."*

4. To persuade someone to support something after they initially did not support it:
to win over

*"The presentation started off pretty badly, but in the end I managed to **win over** the board members, and they accepted my proposal."*

5. To make small changes in order to perfect a process or a skill over a period of time:
to hone/refine

*"I want to **hone/refine** my English accent over the next year."*

6. To remain emotionally faithful to someone or something: **to cling to**

*"We can't keep **cling to** old, comfortable methods, otherwise we will fall behind our competition."*

7. To get a negative reaction to something new that has either been proposed or introduced: **to get some pushback**

*"It is a great idea, but we must be aware that we will probably **get some pushback** from some members of the team."*

8. To test something with a small sample size before introducing it to a bigger group: **To test the waters**

*"We need to determine if the new method is going to work. Let's **test the waters** with just 1 department for now, and then we can implement it across the whole company".*

9. To change the arrangement or form of something completely: **to revamp**

*"We have decided to **revamp** the whole department. We're going to replace up to 50% of the staff."*

10. To estimate the level or volume of something: **to gauge**

*"Let's **gauge** the reaction of the consumers before we decide what to do next."*

11. To be open to something new: **to be receptive to**

*"Eventually, the board were **receptive** to my idea after I outlined how much profit the company can expect to make."*

13. To change something in a small yet significant way: **to alter**

*"We should **alter** the colour of the logo, because it looks slightly too bright."*

B) Key Words in a New Context

The Dreaded Rebrand

Tech Innovations Inc. had noticed its profits dwindling over the previous 2 years, so something drastic needed to be done in order to stay competitive in the super fast-paced tech market.

The first step was to pinpoint the specific areas where they needed to transform. The first shortcoming was blatantly obvious. The brand image, including the logo, slogan and colour scheme hadn't changed since the 1990s, so it needed to be completely **revamped/overhauled** with a modern logo and complete new look.

Secondly, the website also looked a little dated, and it needed to be **refined/honed** slightly and optimized for mobile devices. They also needed **to overhaul/revamp** their digital marketing strategy completely, by establishing Instagram and TikTok accounts and ditching their Facebook campaigns.

As with any major change, the management **got some pushback**, mainly from more established employees in the company. Some employees wanted to **cling to** the old ways, which was understandable because it was what they had been used to for so long. As an employee, you get comfortable with the way things work, and you can become a little **indifferent** towards the overall success of the company, especially if you feel that it doesn't affect you personally. Employees really need to buy into the values of a company in order to strive for the company's success as opposed to just working for a paycheck. In order to **won over** the more sceptical employees, the company offered bonuses and put on events in order to make their workforce feel more invested in the success of the company.

With the new branding, management knew they had to firstly **gauge** the reactions of their customers before moving forward with a complete rebrand. They **tested the waters** by conducting surveys and focus groups.

The feedback was clear. Customers were more **receptive to** one particular design, so it was a no-brainer that this is how they should proceed, and so the long transformation process began.

It wasn't an easy process, but the newly enthusiastic and highly engaged team at Tech Innovations Inc. were committed to seeing it through. They were motivated and excited by the potential for growth that lay ahead.

Today we can see how all the hard work and sacrifice eventually paid off. Both staff and customers have really **embraced** the new branding and changes to the site. Sales are now soaring, and the company's brand is stronger than ever, with a modern feel appropriate for an innovative tech company.

C) Comprehension Questions

1. Paragraph 1 explains how Tech Innovations Inc.'s profits were dwindling. Based on the context of the paragraph and article in general, what do you think is meant by the verb 'dwindling'?

If something is dwindling, it means that it is slowly decreasing in size, amount or strength. Based on the first paragraph and the article in general, it is clear that profits are decreasing, but the fact that it says that they 'noticed' profits dwindling suggests that profits were not decreasing so dramatically.

2. The main area of change discussed in the article is the brand image. In the second paragraph, we see the phrase "the first shortcoming was blatantly obvious". Could you re-phrase this in simpler English using synonyms?

"The first weakness was very clear"

A 'shortcoming' is a weakness. This comes from the verb 'to come up short', meaning to not meet the required standard. "Her performance came up short in the interview."

If something is 'blatant', it means that it is very clear and obvious. 'blatantly obvious' is a very strong collocation.

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3. What was the main problem with the social media campaigns?
The social media campaigns were focused on Facebook as opposed to more popular platforms for younger audiences, such as TikTok and Instagram.
 4. For employees to embrace new changes and fully support a change process, what do the employees need to do, and how did Tech Innovations Inc. deal with this?
Employees need to 'buy into' the company's values. To 'buy into' something means to believe in an idea/philosophy/values. Tech Innovations Inc. dealt with this by offering employees bonuses and hosting company events in order to make the workforce feel more invested.
 5. In paragraph 7, what do you think the phrasal verb 'to see something through' means?
To 'see something through' means to continue with something until the end, even though it will be difficult. This is naturally a really useful phrasal verb when talking about a change process.
 6. In the final paragraph, it is mentioned that sales are 'soaring'. What do you think this means based on the context of the sentence?
If something is 'soaring', it means that it is increasing rapidly.