



## Will Standard Life Aberdeen's rebrand to Abrdn stick?

How much should we care what brand experts and other commentators on social media (including me) are saying and predicting about Standard Life Aberdeen's rebrand to Abrdn? A big fat zero. What they (I) say has very little relationship to whether or not the rebrand will be a success or another flop like Monday or Consignia (are you old enough to remember those?).

The only opinions that count in this discussion are the people who work for and lead the company and the people that buy their products and services. Expert commentary and Twitter chit chat are just noise. The name is the name and had to change anyway given that Standard Life Aberdeen sold its insurance business and was concentrating on investing, so throwing some history out the window was a given.

What's more important are the values, culture and purpose that sit behind and drive the new name. A name change is an opportunity to create and tell a different and more compelling story, to be more (or less) than what you were before.

I hope and expect that as part of this process Abrdn has been and will continue to listen to its customers, employees and other stakeholders to ensure it is aligned with and reflects the concerns and aspirations of the people that really matter to its success. If they haven't done that, then it's likely leadership will lose its mettle and cave in to the external "expert" pressure. I honestly hope they don't.

My advice to the leadership of Abrdn is to ignore the experts you didn't pay and stay the course. You don't need to buy a vowel. Keep listening to your tribes. If you listen and act on behalf of the people that matter to your success, you can call yourself whatever you like as far as I'm concerned.

You've created a new name and an opportunity. You've raised the temperature and got people's attention for a business that frankly was drifting. Don't be afraid. Don't be distracted by the hissing sounds on social media. Full steam ahead.