

## THE GEOPATH REBRAND: WHY BRANDS MATTER

A conversation with Kym Frank and Lee Rafkin  
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*Kym Frank and Lee Rafkin sat down to discuss the Geopath rebrand one year later.*

**Lee:** Hi Kym! It's been a year since we created the Geopath brand, which was formerly known as The Traffic Audit Bureau for Media Measurement, or "TAB". That's quite a mouthful! I thought it would be a good time to look back, take stock, and talk about the lessons we learned.

**Kym:** Absolutely! I cannot express how passionate we are about our new brand. It was a turning point in our evolution as an organization. I had just joined TAB, and I knew we needed to completely reimagine who we were, to become more relevant and more valuable to our members – advertisers, agencies, and media owners in out of home advertising. Our rebrand is one of our greatest accomplishments, because the strategy we created has really become our "north star"...our roadmap for decision-making as an organization.

**Lee:** That is so great to hear. Evolving organizations need a really single-minded brand strategy, to focus everyone on what you stand for, what makes you different, and why people should care. Branding has always been driven by storytelling and culture. On both counts, TAB's story needed a dramatic update. And the culture needed to be re-energized.

**Kym:** That is so true. We certainly had our work cut out for us. Rebranding may seem like something you can do on your own, but in hindsight, getting help from an outside expert, someone from outside of your own bubble, was essential. You helped us set up a Brand Council made up of our members, and you involved them every step of the way. You facilitated an incredibly empowering, inclusive, and effective process. Everyone bought in, and that made all the difference in the world. It energized and focused us like nothing else. And it rallied everyone around a new brand, a new vision, and a new culture for Geopath. It was awesome!

**Lee:** That is so encouraging to hear. Everyone involved understood we were doing so much more than changing the name...although I must say the Geopath name is pretty cool.

**Kym:** Our name was only the beginning. In order to map out where we wanted to go, we first had to take an honest look at who we were, warts and all. In order to change people's perceptions, we needed to understand how we were perceived in the first place.

**Lee:** That's right. So we started at the beginning, with market research. We interviewed advertisers, agencies, and media owners. We identified the pain points and the barriers you faced, and we called them out in a "case for change," so everyone knew exactly where Geopath stood, and where the brand needed to go.

**Kym:** We learned so much through this process, and it helped us develop a very focused strategy. We learned that we needed to evolve from an 'old-school' billboard ratings bureau, to a dynamic leader in OOH audience measurement. From slow moving and bureaucratic to more agile, accountable, and entrepreneurial. From opaque to more transparent and accessible. From old-fashioned to more of an 'Ad-Tech' start up culture. We identified what was holding us back, and we addressed it in a proactive way that pointed us in the right direction.

**Lee:** Once we did that work, the answer was clear. In the face of disruptive change, we needed to establish Geopath as the trusted leader and the market standard for audience measurement in the out of home advertising industry. And, we needed to create a value proposition much bigger than ratings that acknowledged the role data analytics, mobile, geo-location, and other technologies were playing in OOH. So, we ditched the descriptor "OOH Ratings" and defined what you do as "Audience Location Measurement." This sent a clear

message that Geopath was shifting from measuring billboards to measuring people, and how people interact and engage with advertising as they move throughout their day. This was a huge step-change in how Geopath saw itself, and in how Geopath told its story. Suddenly, people started to actually understand what Geopath does!



**Kym:** That led naturally to our brand positioning – "Powering a smarter OOH marketplace." This is exactly how we see ourselves, and how our members and the market see us, too. Everything we do is driven by this simple vision of making the OOH market smarter. Our positioning felt right a year ago, and it feels even more right today.

**Lee:** We also spent a lot of time thinking about an authentic voice that reflected your culture and your vision for client service.

**Kym:** True. Most of us here are research and data geeks, and we passionately embrace our 'Inner Geek'! We get extremely excited about data and insights, and it shows in our culture. We launched a client helpline at [geekout@geopath.org](mailto:geekout@geopath.org), where members can get all their questions answered. And we encouraged all of our members to consider us an extension of their own research teams. We love being nerds and sharing our knowledge. And our members appreciate it! Who wouldn't want their very own data geek to help them?

**Lee:** Sign me up! Overall, we listened to the voice of the customer, developed a responsive strategy, and then added some inspired creativity to build an effective brand for Geopath. We signaled to the market that Geopath is nothing like the 83 year old Traffic Audit Bureau. We designed a simple, elegant logo and identity system for the brand. And we launched it all with a Times Square Takeover and a party during Advertising Week. It was so exciting to see the brand come to life in Times Square and on mobile billboards all around New York City. It gets me every time!



**Kym:** Exciting? Are you kidding? My mom was so excited to see Geopath lit up in Times Square that she actually cried. No one mistakes Geopath for TAB anymore. No one thinks we're old fashioned. No one thinks we count cars. Everyone loves our new brand. We can't print up the t-shirts fast enough!



**Lee:** It always comes down to the t-shirts! The ultimate compliment is when people want to wear your brand on their chest. So Kym, is there anything you'd suggest to other groups contemplating a similar project?

**Kym:** Yes. It's so easy to underestimate how important the strategy side of branding is. Anyone can change a name or update a logo. But doing the hard work of defining what you do and what you stand for... that is so important. Take the time to do the job right. Make sure you have someone who is not embedded in your organization to guide the process. It's made our job so much easier as we take on all of the day-to-day decisions we have to make, and as we build out our high-performing organization. Thank you for being our Sherpa for our rebrand.

**Lee:** It was a genuine pleasure to work with you, your team, and the Geopath Brand Council. You guys were all-in! Brands really do matter. And I'm so glad Geopath decided to invest in theirs.

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**Kym Frank** is President of Geopath, the OOH industry standard in audience location measurement. Sometimes, Kym matches her wardrobe with the teal color in the new Geopath logo. She loves dogs, fishing, camping, Tom Waits, and a great pair of heels. Visit [geopath.org](http://geopath.org) or reach Kym at [kym@geopath.org](mailto:kym@geopath.org).

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