

New Year's branding change is a long time in coming

By Sheila Nero

On January 1, our company officially will begin the transition to a single brand: DTE Energy. But, because the DTE Energy brand has been used for years, we aren't saying "out with the old" and "in with the new." It's simply "business as usual." [Click for more.](#)

While the Detroit Edison and MichCon brands will always be a cherished part of our history, we are moving into the future as a unified DTE Energy. Effective January 1, we will retire the MichCon and Detroit Edison names. Externally, we will refer to our electric and gas utility companies as DTE Energy. When we need to make a distinction between these businesses we will refer to Detroit Edison as DTE Electric and MichCon as DTE Gas.

"Detroit Edison and MichCon have long and proud histories in Michigan, but it is time to move forward with a single brand representing the best of both utilities and our other energy businesses," said Detroit Edison President **Steve Kurmas**. "Research indicates that our customers already think of us as DTE Energy."

MichCon President **Jerry Norcia** said, "Many of us may have an emotional attachment to the MichCon and Detroit Edison brands and they will always be a proud part of our heritage. The move to a single brand will reinforce the thinking that we're all one team working together to become a best operated company."

Dave Whitman, director of advertising and brand communications, says, “Our customers already see us as DTE Energy. We need to catch up to them in terms of how they see us.”

The change will not be noticeable in the day-to-day life of most employees. It will begin immediately, but be implemented over time:

- Building signs and company vehicles will be replaced with new branding through their natural life cycles, with some higher visibility signs changed sooner.
- Business cards, stationery, marketing material and forms will be replaced with new branding as supplies need to be replenished.
- Customers will start seeing the change on their bills in the first few months of the new year.
- There will be some naming changes but it will not impact payroll or your payroll deductions. Early in April, the name on your paycheck will change.
- The move to a single brand will not involve any changes to your pension benefit or any other company benefits.

From our customers’ mouths

When asked how they feel about the move to one brand, most of the customers said they either approve of the change or are neutral. Some said that it is confusing for us to have multiple names, and customers also said they were already very familiar with the DTE Energy name.

Here are some verbatim comments from our customers that were captured when we conducted research:

- *“Well, it seems like a reasonable thing to do.”*
- *“I already think of it as DTE.”*
- *“It just makes more sense. Having just one name for all the different companies makes the most sense.”*
- *“The name doesn’t matter. The price and delivery is what matters.”*
- *“If it's the same company and they are providing the same service, then why not simplify the name?”*
- *“I don't really know them as MichCon. I only deal with DTE.”*
- *“... it has been changed for a long time already.”*
- *“... I think it would be a more efficient way to run the company and it would help keep the costs down.”*
- *“Frankly, I thought they were already one. It would end the confusion.”*

Whitman says, “All changes won’t happen overnight. We have updated our brand standards to make sure we’re using the DTE Energy brand consistently in all of our communications.” [Click here](#) (link to

<http://dteenergy.com/brandstandards/>) to view the updated brand standards.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are we making this change now?

When DTE and MCN merged in 2001, a decision was made to retain the Detroit Edison and MichCon brands for a period of time to allow the brand equity associated with these two companies to transfer to DTE Energy over time. The intent was always to phase out these brands at some point. While the Detroit Edison and MichCon brands will always be a cherished part of our history, we are moving into the future as a unified DTE Energy.

The move to one brand ties nicely to our value of playing to win as a team and will help pull us together as one company. We will also achieve some efficiency gains by moving to a single brand.

2. What will happen to the MichCon and Detroit Edison brands?

We will officially begin the transition to DTE Energy on Jan. 1, 2013. Externally, we will refer to our electric and gas utility companies as DTE Energy. When we need to make a distinction between these businesses we will refer to Detroit Edison as DTE Electric and MichCon as DTE Gas (the formal legal entity name will be DTE Electric Company and DTE Gas Company). This branding approach is consistent with the architecture already in use with many of the non-utility subsidiaries (DTE Energy Trading, DTE Biomass Energy, etc.).

3. When is it appropriate to use DTE Gas and DTE Electric?

We know that at times a distinction will still have to be made between our utilities. Our intent is for employees to think of us as one company and for customers to know us as a single brand -- DTE Energy.

4. Won't this new branding confuse our customers?

No, in fact our customers already see us as DTE Energy. We have done extensive research on this in our electric and gas service territories. Our research indicates that customers are very familiar with the DTE Energy name.

5. Will this change my pension or other benefits?

The move to a single brand will include some name changes, but it will not impact payroll or your payroll deductions. The name on your paycheck will change in early April. It will not involve any changes to your pension benefit or any other company benefits.

6. Should I update my business cards now?

There is no need to do this immediately. We recognize that it is going to take some time to implement these changes, and we don't want to incur unplanned expenses just to make this change. You can continue to use your current business cards until you run out. When it comes time to reorder your business cards, or any other materials that include the Detroit Edison and MichCon names, you can make the changes at that time.

7. How is the transition being managed?

A cross-functional team led by Sandy Ennis and Bruce Peterson has been put together to address the activities affected by this

change. We are identifying all of the issues and building a work plan to execute all of the changes.

8. If I have additional questions, where should I go for them?

Refer to the “One DTE Brand” [community](#) on QuestLinks.

SIDEBAR

Values in action

We see our work through the eyes of those we *serve* ... and know that our work is a powerful means to serve others.

We play to win as a *team* ... and put the needs of our enterprise first.