# Warner Bros. Discovery reverses Max rebrand to restore HBO Max's premium appeal



Warner Bros. Discovery's announcement of the reversion of its streaming service's name from Max back to HBO Max has generated considerable confusion and debate among subscribers. The decision, revealed during a high-profile Upfront event in New York, marks a surprising shift back to the brand that has been synonymous with premium television for decades.

Shauna Spenley, the Global Chief Marketing Officer of Direct-to-Consumer, acknowledged the puzzlement surrounding the frequent rebranding, stating, “Well, you know, it's been about two years so that's roughly our track record, so right now is probably the right time.” She emphasised the competitive landscape of streaming, likening it to "fast fashion" and asserting that consumers would prefer a single high-quality option over numerous subpar choices. This branding overhaul, which is set to take effect this summer, is touted by the company as a strategy to enhance the service's distinctiveness and appeal, leveraging the established reputation of HBO for high-quality content.

This reversal comes just two years after HBO Max rebranded to Max, a change that aimed to integrate HBO's prestigious offerings with Discovery's family-friendly content. Initially, Warner Bros. Discovery sought to broaden the platform’s appeal to families, but the broader market evaluation now indicates that the HBO name retains significant recognised value. The rebranding, emphasised by CEO David Zaslav, is seen as a commitment to bolstering premium content amid a turbulent streaming environment where traditional cable subscriptions continue to decline.

Despite the rationale provided, subscriber reactions have ranged from bewilderment to outright frustration. Many have taken to social media to question the wisdom of the rebranding cycle, with comments reflecting a sense of futility about the unnecessary shifts. Critically, some subscribers have lamented the expenditure involved in frequent changes, suggesting that consultation fees for branding strategies could be better spent elsewhere, especially given the overall competitiveness of the streaming landscape.

This latest rebranding initiative is a strategic move to increase international subscriber growth. Acknowledging that Warner Bros. Discovery had amassed over 122 million streaming subscribers, the company aspires to exceed 150 million by the end of 2026. Plans are underway to expand HBO Max into new markets, including the UK, Ireland, Italy, and Germany, thereby capitalising on HBO's established credibility in premium content.

Importantly, the original push to drop the HBO name was met with scepticism from industry figures. Critics, including Netflix Co-CEO Ted Sarandos, expressed concerns about the decision diminishing the service's premium nature. Reports indicate that the decision to return to the HBO branding has been largely influenced by feedback from viewers and stakeholders, highlighting the brand’s longstanding association with quality programming such as "Game of Thrones" and "The Sopranos."

This move exemplifies the current tumultuous phase of the streaming industry, characterised by rising competition, subscriber churn, and evolving consumer preferences. As companies, including Warner Bros. Discovery, navigate this challenging landscape—where fast-paced changes and shifting strategies are the norm—the return to a familiar identity may resonate with audiences longing for the prestige and quality that HBO has consistently represented.

The reinstatement of HBO Max is not merely a name change; it seeks to reaffirm Warner Bros. Discovery's long-term vision of focusing on premium content while reassessing its position amid an increasingly crowded market. With flagship fares like the next season of "The Last of Us" and a highly anticipated Harry Potter series on the horizon, the company aims to restore consumer confidence and loyalty under its storied HBO banner.

As Warner Bros. Discovery prepares for this transition, it faces the challenge of aligning its branding efforts with the expectations of its audience while steadily pursuing ambitious subscriber growth in an intensely competitive digital age.

**Reference Map**1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
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4. Paragraphs 2, 5, 6
5. Paragraph 6
6. Paragraphs 2, 4
7. Paragraph 1

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-14712449/max-subscribers-hbo-rebrand-streaming-service.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/warner-bros-discovery-revives-hbo-max-branding-global-push-2025-05-14/> - Warner Bros. Discovery is reintroducing the HBO name to its streaming platform, rebranding Max as HBO Max starting this summer. This move reverses the 2023 decision to drop 'HBO' from the service following a merger of HBO content with Discovery's lifestyle offerings. The change aims to leverage HBO’s globally recognized reputation for high-quality programming, including acclaimed series like 'Game of Thrones' and 'The Sopranos,' to drive international subscriber growth. CEO David Zaslav emphasized the return to HBO branding as a commitment to premium content. The original rebranding had faced criticism from consumers and industry figures, including Netflix Co-CEO Ted Sarandos. Streaming is a crucial growth area for WBD amid declining cable TV revenue due to cord-cutting. As of the first quarter of 2025, WBD had 122.3 million streaming subscribers and aims to exceed 150 million by the end of 2026. The company is expanding its international presence, with plans to launch HBO Max in the UK, Ireland, Italy, and Germany following a rollout in over 70 countries the previous year.
3. <https://as.com/meristation/noticias/max-vuelve-a-cambiar-de-nombre-y-regresa-como-hbo-max-a-partir-de-este-verano-n/> - La plataforma de streaming anteriormente conocida como HBO Max, que cambió su nombre a simplemente Max en 2023, ha anunciado que recuperará su nombre original como HBO Max a partir del verano de 2025. Casey Bloys, presidente y director ejecutivo de HBO y Max, explicó que la decisión responde a una evaluación de mercado de los últimos dos años, concluyendo que el nombre HBO representa mejor la calidad y prestigio de la marca. Este cambio busca capitalizar la fortaleza del nombre HBO en la industria del entretenimiento. La plataforma mantendrá su misma oferta de contenidos, destacando próximas producciones como la segunda temporada de The Last of Us y la nueva serie de Harry Potter, ambos proyectos esperados con gran anticipación por el público. La vuelta al nombre HBO Max simboliza una estrategia para reforzar el reconocimiento y la confianza del consumidor, recuperando un nombre familiar y consolidado.
4. <https://www.axios.com/2023/04/12/warner-bros-discovery-max-streaming-service> - Warner Bros. Discovery has announced the launch of its new combined streaming service, 'Max,' which will debut on May 23. The merging of its current services aims to enhance competition with leading streamers like Netflix and Disney+ and potentially generate synergies to help manage its significant debt. Following the merger between Discovery and WarnerMedia the previous year, this new streamlining effort under CEO David Zaslav's leadership may also prepare the company for future consolidations or acquisitions. After its initial U.S. launch, 'Max' will expand to international markets in the following months.
5. <https://time.com/6253697/streaming-wars-disney-chaos-era/> - In the ever-evolving landscape of the streaming industry, Disney is reportedly considering licensing some of its original content to rival platforms to mitigate losses, challenging the prevalent strategy of hoarding content for its own streaming service. This shift reflects broader industry movements, exemplified by Warner Bros. Discovery’s similar strategy and actions like HBO Max removing titles to sell to ad-supported platforms. Recent news from the sector includes leadership changes at major companies, large-scale cancellations of shows, and efforts to adapt business models amidst uncertain profitability in streaming. The industry's seeming chaos mirrors past disruptions in other media sectors, indicating a period of instability and strategic re-evaluation as companies grapple with sustainable approaches to streaming.
6. <https://www.techradar.com/news/hbo-max-price-free-trial-movies-the-snyder-cut-and-more-explained> - Max, Warner Bros Discovery's (WBD) new streaming service, has replaced HBO Max and launched in Australia. This comprehensive guide provides information on Max, including its features, device compatibility, pricing, content offerings, and more. Max combines content from HBO Max and Discovery+, offering a vast library of TV shows and movies from various brands, including DC Comics, Cartoon Network, TLC, and HGTV. The service is available in multiple regions, including the US, Latin America, Europe, Japan, and Southeast Asia, with plans to expand further. Subscription costs in Australia range from AU$11.99 to AU$21.99 per month, with no free trial available. Max's offerings include popular TV dramas, comedy shows, animated series, and exclusive movie deals. The platform also supports multiple accessibility features, 4K streaming, and offers offline viewing for certain tiers. While Max aims to compete with other popular streaming services, its success will depend on attracting new subscribers and maintaining an extensive and appealing content library.
7. <https://www.theverge.com/2023/4/12/23673475/warner-bros-discovery-max-new-name-hbo> - Warner Bros. Discovery’s revamped subscription service is just called “Max,” and the company explained why it dropped the HBO branding at a press event on Wednesday. A key reason was to help Warner Bros. Discovery broaden the appeal of the app so that it’s not mostly targeted at content for adults. “We want [Max] to be welcoming to all and easily recognizable, including to a key customer segment, kids and families,” JB Perrette, president and CEO of Warner Bros. Discovery’s global streaming and games, said at the event. “We all love HBO. And it’s a brand that has been built over five decades to be the edgy, groundbreaking trendsetter in entertainment for adults. But it’s not exactly where parents would most eagerly drop off their kids.” With Max, Warner Bros. Discovery sees an opportunity to better showcase its kids-focused brands like Cartoon Network, Boomerang, the Wizarding World, and Looney Tunes within the app. But HBO isn’t going away, of course, and you’ll still see it in the app. “HBO is not TV — HBO is HBO,” Perrette said. “It needs to stay that way, which is why we will privilege it in the product experience and also not push it to the breaking point.” We won’t have long to wait to see exactly how everything will appear in the app, as Max launches on May 23rd. Current HBO Max subscribers will pay the same price they do now when the app updates to Max, and users’ “profiles, settings, watch history, ‘Continue Watching,’ and ‘My List’ items” will transfer to the new experience, Warner Bros. Discovery said in a press release. Update April 12th, 2:30PM ET: Added details about the transition from HBO Max to Max.