

Naming

The right name is timeless, tireless, easy to say and remember; it stands for something, and facilitates brand extensions. Its sound has rhythm. It looks great in the text of an email and in the logo. A well-chosen name is an essential brand asset, as well as a 24/7 workhorse.

Naming requires a creative, disciplined, strategic approach.

Qualities of an effective name

Meaningful: It communicates something about the essence of the brand. It supports the image that the company wants to convey.

Distinctive: It is unique, as well as easy to remember, pronounce, and spell. It is differentiated from the competition. Easy to share on social networks.

Future-Oriented: It positions the company for growth, change, and success. It has sustainability and preserves possibilities. It has long legs.

Modular: It enables a company to build brand extensions with ease.

Protectable: It can be owned and trademarked. A domain is available.

Positive: It has positive connotations in the markets served. It has no strong negative connotations.

Visual: It lends itself well to graphic presentation in a logo, in text, and in brand architecture.

Types of names

Founder: *Ben & Jerry's, Martha Stewart, Ralph Lauren, Mrs. Fields*

pros: easier to protect

cons: inextricably tied to a real human being

Descriptive: *YouSendIt, E*TRADE, Toys "R" Us*

pros: clearly conveys the nature of the business

cons: as company grows and diversifies, the name may become limiting

Fabricated: (*made-up names*) *Pinterest, Kodak, TiVo, Haagen-Dazs*

pros: distinctive and easier to copyright

cons: need to educate the market as to the nature of the business

Metaphor: *Nike, Patagonia, Quartz, Zappos, Amazon*

things, places, people, animals, processes, mythological names, or foreign words are used in to allude to a quality of the company.

Acronym: *IBM, GE, CNN, MoMA, DKNY*

cons: difficult to remember and to copyright. substantial investment in advertising.

IBM and GE are well-known only after they established themselves with the full spelling of their names.

Magic Spell: *Flickr, Tumblr, Netflix*

pros: distinctive and protectable

Combinations of the above: *Citibank, Hope's Cookies*

pros: customers and investors like names they can understand. Some of the best names combine name types.

Naming Basics

Examine brand goals and target market needs

Evaluate existing competitor names

When you are brainstorming, there are no stupid ideas

Create numerous names, Be prolific

Organize in categories and themes

Look at hybrids and mimetics

Explore variations/iterations on a theme

Always examine a name in context - say the name, email it, put it on a business card...

Consider sound, cadence, and ease of pronunciation

Check for red flags, cultural and language connotations

Meaning and association are built over time

Notable Renaming

Old Name	New Name
Anderson Consulting	Accenture
Apple Computer	Apple
Backrub	Google
Brad's Drink	Pepsi-Cola
Comcast	Xfinity
Computing Tabulating Recording Corporation	International Business Machines (IBM)
Datsun	Nissan
David and Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web	Yahoo!
Diet Deluxe	Healthy Choice
Federal Express	FedEx
Graphics Group	Pixar
Kentucky Fried Chicken	KFC
Lucky Goldstar	LG
Malt-O-Meal	MOM Brands
Marufuku Company	Nintendo
Quantum Computer Service	AOL
Service Games	SEGA
ShoeSite.com	zappos.com
Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering Corporation	Sony
United Telephone Company	Sprint
Value Jet	AirTran

Taglines

A tagline is a short phrase that captures a company's brand essence, personality, and positioning, and distinguishes the company. Deceptively simple, they are not arbitrary.

Imperative: Commands action and usually starts with a verb	
YouTube	Broadcast Yourself
Nike	Just Do It
Apple	Think Different
Coca-Cola	Open Happiness
Descriptive: Describes the service, product, or brand promise	
TOMS Shoes	One for One
TED	Ideas worth spreading
Target	Expect More. Pay Less.
GE	Imagination at work
Superlative: Positions the company as best in class	
BMW	The ultimate driving machine
Lufthansa	There's no better way to fly
Budweiser	King of beers
National Guard	Americans at their best

Provocative: Thought-provoking; frequently a question	
Sears	Where else?
Microsoft	Where are you going today?
Mercedes-Benz	What makes a symbol endure?
Dairy Council	Got Milk?
Specific: Reveals the business category	
HSBC	The world's local bank
New York Times	All the news that's fit to print
Olay	Love the skin you're in
Volkswagen	Drivers wanted

Tagline Essential Characteristics

Short

Differentiated from its competitors

Unique

Captures the brand essence and positioning

Easy to say and remember

No negative connotations

Displayed in a small font

Can be protected and trademarked

Evokes an emotional response

Difficult to create