

THE ESSENTIAL NAMING GUIDE

The Art  
*of*  
Naming

*FOURTH EDITION*

LOVINGLY PREPARED BY ZINZIN

The Essential Naming Guide

# The Art of Naming

By Zinzin

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# Let There Be Names.

T.S. Eliot wrote that the world will end with a whimper, not a bang. Perhaps. But it began most evocatively with a Big Bang. Did the Big Bang know itself by that name as it was happening? Doubtful –

the name came much later. In our world today, however, everything begins with a name. As you embark on the adventure of naming your company or product, you have the opportunity to create a

Big Bang or a little whimper.

Do the right thing – make a Big Bang.

This document will show you how.

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# Introduction: Who is Zinzin?

Zinzin is a naming and branding agency that creates powerful product and company names to propel and differentiate brands beyond their competition. We are committed to helping companies rise above the generic branding chatter that clogs cultural discourse. We want to set your brand free.

It is our belief that naming is a science, and for that we have a rigorous, battle-tested process in place. But we also firmly believe that naming is an art, and it is the art and poetry of great names that separate companies from the pack of competitors who fail to understand the value of a great name. A great name is an art, a great naming process is a science. Science + art = the most powerful project outcome.

## About our name

Our own name, like many we have created for other companies, is full of surprises, layers of meaning, and rich associations, though at first glance it may seem no more than a "made-up" name with no story. No matter, a little brand called "Google" is in the same boat. And like "Google," our name is also uniquely "unknown" enough to enable us to brand it as THE place for the naming of companies and products. Eventually, we want "Zinzin" to become synonymous with naming the way "Google" is for search.

So where did the name "Zinzin" come from? Zinzin is colloquial French for bonkers, cracked, touched, loopy, potty, crazy, nuts. Just what you want in a naming firm, right? But wait, the plot thickens...

In addition to being a "crazy" word, Zinzin is also a French slang placeholder name, a name that you call something when you don't know or specify the actual name (like "gadget" or "thingamabob" or "whatchamacallit").

Zinzin = entity, thing.

In this sense, Zinzin is our very own permanent placeholder name, a universal *urname*. James Joyce recognized the value of this word, and coined his own meanings for it in *Finnegans Wake*, where it represented noise, sin, punk, and the great disruptor, which, incidentally, is Zinzin's role in the global naming industry.

Read more about the Story of Zinzin, including team bios and more about the Zinzin name, on our website: <http://www.zinzin.com/our-story/>.

# The Naming Process

## The Road To An Amazing Name

Most companies that settle for a mediocre name do so because they fail to understand that a name is the single most important element of your brand strategy. But why exactly is a name so important?

The answer is simple: a company or product name is the first and most elemental point of definition and audience contact with your brand. In most respects, the name IS the brand, and sets the tone for everything your brand is about. In short, everything you do or ever will do begins with your name. That's why it's vital to get the name right.

When you have great name, people will remember it, talk about it, and have an emotional connection to your brand. The name becomes a natural and authentic extension of your brand, and demonstrates to the world the values of your brand positioning.

At Zinzin we strongly believe that having a powerful brand name will be one of the most important business decisions you will ever make. However, we also believe that we are NOT naming your company or product. We are, instead, naming the positioning of your company and product, the unique tone, personality, ideas and story you want your brand to express to the world. All great names support the positioning of the business or product they speak for and find a unique way to reinvigorate or change the conversation that an industry has been having with its customers.

Our naming process begins with understanding everything about your brand, where it's been and where it's headed, your competition, and your entire industry. Throughout the naming process, we will work together with you to refine the brand positioning based on our discussions of actual names, because the more specific and nuanced the positioning, the more effective the name will be.

# Competitive Analysis

A key component of any naming or branding exercise is to thoroughly understand the competitive *namespace*, or landscape mapping of names, in your industry:

- What are the company or product names in your market space?
- Do they cluster into obvious types of names?
- Where in this spectrum of competitor names does your name appear?
- Where in this spectrum of competitor names do you want your new name appear in order to A) stand out from the competition, or B) blend in?
- Is there an opportunity in your market space to become a dominant brand by standing out clearly from the pack?

Our goal at Zinzin is to create names that set brands free from their competition. In most cases, blending-in should not even be an option. During the competitive analysis phase of a naming project, we plot the company, product or service names of a given market sector on a namespace grid (see the Search Engines Namespace, below), which becomes a useful reference document of the competitive name reality facing your brand. This helps everyone on your naming team understand what types of names are overused in your market sector and what territory is ripe for exploration if you want to differentiate your brand from the competition.

We encourage you to print out this namespace grid and play around with how the names are classified. It's an exercise that will get you thinking about the names in your own market space, which you can map out using the blank namespace chart, below.

## Competitive Namespace: Search Engines

Here is a selection of search engine names plotted in a competitive Namespace grid, ranked by relative value from 0 (worst) to 5 (best). See below for a detailed explanation.

	DESCRIPTIVE	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5		Google		Yahoo!	5
4					4
3		Bing	AltaVista HotBot SideStep	Hummingbird Kayak Northern Light Sphinx Wink	3
2	Wolfram Alpha	Alexa Clusty Lycos Mahalo Rollyo Tapu Trex	AnyWho About.com Ask ChaCha Excite Galaxy Go Jumper OpenText Zoominfo	Dogpile Grub Mamma Spock	2
1	AllTheWeb Answers.com Info.com Sciencenet	Blekkio Coveo Funnelback Grokker ISYS Kartoo Lucene Mobissimo Namazu Nutch Tanganode TeraText TREN Vivisimo Zabasearch	AskMeNow Brainboost ChunkIt! DeeperWeb Dieselpoint eHow ex.plode.us Harvester42 GigaBlast MegaSpider MetaGopher Monster Crawler Myriad Search OmniFind Seeks SharePoint Supercrawler Surfwax SWISH-E Turbo10 WireDoo	DuckDuckGo InfoTiger LeapFish	1

0	Concept Searching Limited DataparkSearch dtSearch Finding-People.com iSearch Live QnA LiveSearch Metscrawler MetaLib SearchPort Secure Enterprise Search WebCrawler X1 Enterprise Search	Cuil Endeca Eurekster Exalead Faroo Gonzui Inbenta Ixquick Krozilo Lexxe mnoGoSearch Xapian YaCy Yebol Zettair	Expert System Fast Search & Transfer ht://Dig OpenFTS Powerset What-U-Seek	0
	<b>DESCRIPTIVE</b>	<b>INVENTED</b>	<b>EXPERIENTIAL</b>	<b>EVOCATIVE</b>

**Name Value:** The five levels of the vertical axis represent the relative value of a given name, ranked from a low of 0 value to a max of 5. The Value ranking is of course subjective, but it is derived from factors such as how engaging a name is with its target audience; how many layers of meaning, story, myth, metaphor, imagery the name has; associations, imagery, multiple layers; how memorable the name is; and how differentiated from the competition the name is.

**Descriptive Names:** Descriptive names are purely descriptive of what a company or product does or its function. They might also take the form of an acronym or the names of the company founders.

**Invented Names:** This category of names includes the purely invented, the morphemic mash-up, and foreign words that are not widely known to English speakers. At their best, Invented names can be poetic, rhythmic and ripe for investing with the soul of a brand (think Google).

**Experiential Names:** These are names that map to the experience of using a product or service, or to what a company does, or to an aspect of human experience. This category also includes all the generic adjective-based names, such as Advanced, Superior, Vantage, Smart, Super, Ultra, Mega, etc. Experiential names are usually literal, and are the types of names often created by cross-referencing a vision statement with a thesaurus.

**Evocative Names:** These are names that map metaphorically, rather than literally, to the brand positioning. Evocative names rise above the goods and services being offered, and paint a bigger picture. The best of them tap into a deep reservoir of shared cultural knowledge, myth, story, imagery, association, legend and art, and usually work on multiple levels. Nearly all the greatest brands that you are familiar with have evocative names.

# Blank Namespace Chart

Here is a blank Namespace chart you can print and use for you own naming project.

	<b>DESCRIPTIVE</b>	<b>INVENTED</b>	<b>EXPERIENTIAL</b>	<b>EVOCATIVE</b>	
<b>5</b>					<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>					<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>					<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>					<b>2</b>
<b>1</b>					<b>1</b>
<b>0</b>					<b>0</b>
	<b>DESCRIPTIVE</b>	<b>INVENTED</b>	<b>EXPERIENTIAL</b>	<b>EVOCATIVE</b>	

# Brand Positioning

We talk a lot about brand positioning and how important it is, so let's define our terms. Simply put, the positioning of a brand is the set of core messages the brand demonstrates to the world, through tone, personality, emotion and narrative. So a better way to think about your task is in these terms: you are not naming a company or product – you are instead naming the *positioning* of a company or product. Once you determine the brand positioning, only consider names that map strongly to that positioning. In fact, any names you consider *must* support the brand positioning in order to be successful.

Case in point: Virgin Airways. Now, if Virgin didn't exist, and you were to present this name to an airline naming committee, they would likely offer many valid-sounding reasons why this name can't fly: too edgy; says "we're new at this," which is the wrong message for an industry so dependent on security, trust and experience; people in Catholic countries we fly to will protest; etc. But the truth is that, when a name is in context and supports and is in turn supported by a cogent brand positioning, then people will never deconstruct the name into constituent negative parts. And the brand positioning for Virgin Airways is more along the lines of, "this is a fresh new way to travel / we're re-inventing the air travel experience." And for that message, Virgin is the perfect name.

# Name Development

When we develop names for our clients, we make sure that the name always supports the brand positioning. The discussion of the names we present during the course of a project leads to a continual refinement of the brand positioning, as we hone in on the perfect fit between name and positioning.

There are of course many different types of names, but for the sake of discussion and clarification, we consider four broad classes of names: Descriptive, Invented, Experiential and Evocative.

## Descriptive Names

Descriptive names are purely descriptive of what a company or product does or its function. They might also take the form of an acronym or the names of the company founders. In the past, most names were Descriptive, and that is still the path chosen by the majority of brands. These names have never been the most powerful, and unfortunately, since the rise of the Internet and online searching, it has become nearly

impossible to build an effective brand around a Descriptive name. For example: if you named your new automobile company "Fast Cars," nobody would be able to find you online, because your name would disappear among all the search results for "fast cars."

The notion that a name should be Descriptive in order to "describe what we do," is completely wrong. A name rarely has to describe what the brand is all about -- that will become evident by the context surrounding the brand. The job of the name is to get your brand noticed, remembered and talked about, and that is rarely achieved by Descriptive names.

## Invented Names

This category of names includes the purely invented, the morphemic mash-up, and foreign words that are not widely known to English speakers. At their best, Invented names can be poetic, rhythmic and ripe for investing with the soul of a brand (think Google). Invented names are chosen more and more lately, because they give you the easiest path to domain name and trademark acquisition. Bad invented names, often suffering from "morphemic addiction," litter the cultural landscape, and should serve as a cautionary tale when going this route.

## Experiential Names

These are names that map to the *experience* of using a product or service, or to what a company does, or to an aspect of human experience. This category also includes all the generic adjective-based names, such as Advanced, Superior, Vantage, Smart, Super, Ultra, Mega, etc. Experiential names are usually literal, and are the types of names often created by cross-referencing a vision statement with a thesaurus.

It is possible to create a successful Experiential name, but to do so requires a thorough understanding of the competitive namescape, because in most market sectors there are many, many similar Experiential names, each staking a small claim of semantic turf. Always make sure you are not just falling into the same types of names as everyone else.

## Evocative Names

These are names that map metaphorically, rather than literally, to the brand positioning. Evocative names rise above the goods and services being offered, and paint a bigger picture. The best of them tap into a deep reservoir of shared cultural knowledge, myth, story, imagery, association, legend and art, and usually work on multiple levels. Nearly all the greatest brands that you are familiar with have evocative names.

Nearly all the greatest brands that you are familiar with have evocative names. And in fact, the best of them often have Descriptive, Invented and/or Experiential associations as well. In short, they work on so many levels they constantly surprise with new meaning and relevance.

## Trademark Prescreening

During a Zinzin naming project, all company or product names we present to clients are at minimum prescreened by us against the USPTO trademark database and a Google due diligence screen. Depending upon the requirements of your project, names are also prescreened against the CTM, the WIPO Madrid Protocol, or other global trademark or specialty databases.

We do this in order to feel confident that the names your attorney submits for final trademark screening and application are at least likely to pass muster for registration. If not, valuable time is lost. If you are conducting your own naming process, we've posted links to the major online trademark screening pages here:

<http://www.zinzin.com/process/trademark-prescreening/>

## Linguistic Connotation Screening

Some naming projects we work on require that names be screened for semantic meaning, usage, connotation, spelling and pronunciation in a variety of foreign languages.

Our partner for linguistic and foreign language connotation screening, Translations Direct, is one of the UK's most respected agencies for translation and language-related services. In 1997 its founder Nelly Thelwall, a Swiss national based in Salisbury, England, saw a need for a more thorough approach and introduced a unique four-stage process including editing and proofing by native speakers of the target language.

Today, with experience in more than 40 languages, the company offers single- and multi-language services and is increasingly asked to help with overseas product testing and market research. So what is Nelly's secret? "Clients appreciate our personal service," she says, "but most importantly we deliver work that's fluent, totally accurate and on time."

During the course of a European naming project for a Dutch client, Translations Direct performed linguistic and connotation screens of names in Arabic, Danish, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and

Turkish on a rush basis over a weekend to meet a Monday deadline. And for a recent Canadian project, Translations Direct screened nine names in ten European and fifteen non-European languages with a four-day turnaround!

With Nelly and her crew working for us, we can assure our clients that the name we create for them will not contain any nasty surprises in other languages.

## Name Evaluation

At some point near the end of a naming project comes the time to actually choose your new name. How do you evaluate the names on your shortlist to make sure you choose the best name? Sometimes it is obvious which name is the best, and once you become aware of that all other names tend to fall away. Still, it's important to understand the many attributes and qualities that make up a name, so you can make informed, objective decisions when comparing one name to another.

With all of these qualities, there is no inherent "right" answer. The single most important criteria is that the name support the brand positioning . For example, if the positioning demands a name that is warm and human, but a given name under consideration is cold and technical, then that name is failing to support the brand positioning in the "Temperature" quality. These qualities are also relevant to all aspects of a brand, not just the name.

**Voice:** How does a name sound? Does it roll off the tongue? Is it easy or fun to say? Can it be easily spoken by speakers of many different languages? What does it sound like to others? A name will be spoken many times — in conversation, when answering the phone, in television commercials, YouTube videos, and most importantly, by word-of-mouth. A name that trips people up when spoken, or sounds off-putting when heard, is not going to foster emotional engagement with your audience. This is easy to test on a basic level: have a colleague call you, and answer the phone by speaking the name. How does it feel to do that? How does it feel for your colleague to hear it spoken over the phone?

**Visual:** Names are not only heard, they are seen, in logos, on websites, and in marketing collateral. Names can appear tiny in fine print, and gigantic on a billboard, blimp, or even written across the sky. Looks are important, so make sure the name looks good and avoids obvious syntactical no-nos. It helps to mock-up different visual treatments of the names you are considering, and be sure to show them to designers and other visual people.

**Breadth:** How many aspects of the brand positioning does that name map to? If there are five primary positioning points, does a given name map to all five, to just some of them, or to none?

**Depth:** When a name has many layers of meaning, myth, story, and history, it has great depth. Different people will react to and understand deep names in different ways, and deep names tend to reveal the many facets of their character over time, rather than all at once. Deep names are still just as good the thousandth time you encounter them as they are the first time, they have great legs and never grow old. They accomplish this feat partly because, by their very nature of being deep, avoid the shallow pits of evanescent fads and naming trends (think generic descriptive, ".com," vowel-dropping, color+noun, etc.).

**Temperature:** Is a name warm and human, or cold, clinical, technical? Does it bring a smile to your face, a blank look, or a scowl? This is a quality of names that is based both on linguistics and on emotional reaction.

**Personality:** The unique tone, personality and attitude of a name. Some names are loud and energetic, some are quiet and retiring. Some shout, and others whisper. For some the most important quality is confidence, for others its adventure, revolution, or steadfastness. It could be almost anything, but the key is that the personality of a name reflect the personality of your company. It is the soul of your brand, the thing that most makes your brand yours, not another company's.

**Differentiation:** It only makes sense that, if you intend to differentiate your brand from your competition, that you begin with a name that stands apart from the crowd. This is a key to creating a *memorable* name, since you can't hope for anyone to remember your name if it blends in with all the others in your market sector. When a name stands apart, it gets noticed, talked about, covered in the press, and develops into a distinctive brand with a life of its own.

**X-factor:** This is the wildcard, and is all about mystery, the unknown, the unexpected and far from obvious. Not every brand has it, but for those that do, it can be very powerful. Vitality, energy, liveliness, buzz, electricity, attitude, presence, engagement, provocation, originality, distinctiveness, memorability — these are all concepts related to the X-factor of a name. It's *that certain something*, that very original merging of the unexpected with a clear evocation of the brand positioning. It's what's often behind the "Why didn't I think of that?" feeling. It's what makes a name an epiphany.

## Decision Making

Now you should have a better idea about why certain names work better than others. But name evaluation is also about feeling confident that you chose the best name for your company or product by understanding why certain names work best when all factors of name, positioning, and the competitive Namescape are taken into consideration. Clearly, you are not just choosing a name, you are also making a number of important decisions in order to find the pitch-perfect tone for your brand, for your voice in the world.

Most corporations have no problem delegating marketing and advertising issues to the marketing department, but when naming is involved, especially naming the company itself or key products, suddenly everyone wants to have a say in the process, and it can quickly become politically and emotionally charged. Therefore, it is essential that you keep the number of people involved in a naming project to a minimum, that they have real authority, and that they all understand the ideas outlined above about what factors determine the relative strength of a name. When outside actors have final decision-making authority, it is vital that they be briefed in such a way as to understand a name's intrinsic qualities and how they support the brand positioning. This is what will help you keep the process objective, and avoid the uninformed, subjective "like"/"don't like" response.

# Going Deeper

## Embracing Creative Friction & Uncertainty

Jeremy Dean, in a recent article on his site PsyBlog, "Why People Secretly Fear Creative Ideas,"<sup>1</sup> notes that creative ideas are often rejected in favor of conformity and uniformity, and why this is so, citing several psychology studies (Mueller et al. 2012; Westby & Dawson, 1995<sup>3</sup>) to back up his case. Dean asks rhetorically,

Does society really value creativity? People say they want more creative people, more creative ideas and solutions, but do they really?

The answer, sadly, is no, but why is that so? The reason, Dean writes, is that fear of *uncertainty* overrules the desire for creativity:

Across two experiments Mueller and colleagues found that when people felt uncertain they were:

- ▶ more likely to have negative thoughts about creative ideas,
- ▶ and found it more difficult to recognise creative ideas.

This supports the idea that people don't like creative ideas because they tend to increase uncertainty. The thinking goes like this: we know how to do things we've done before, but new things are mysterious. How will we achieve it? Is it practical? What could go wrong? And so on...

People don't like to feel uncertain; it's an aversive state that generally we try to escape from. Unfortunately creativity requires uncertainty by definition, because we're trying to do something that hasn't been done before.

People deal with the disconnect by saying one thing, "Creativity is good, we want more of it!" but actually rejecting creative ideas for being impractical.

And, the more uncertain people feel, the harder they find it to recognise a truly creative idea. So as a society we end up sticking our heads in the sand and carrying on doing the same old things we've been doing all along, just to avoid feeling uncertain.

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1 <http://www.spring.org.uk/2011/12/why-people-secretly-fear-creative-ideas.php>

2 <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/11/29/0956797611421018>

3 [http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s15326934crj0801\\_1](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s15326934crj0801_1)

Instead we should be embracing uncertainty because it's only when we're unsure that we can be sure we're in new territory.

*Creativity requires uncertainty by definition, because we're trying to do something that hasn't been done before.* Dean is spot-on in his assessment, and a primary factor keeping people from embracing uncertainty is fear of failure. Adrian Savage wrote a great article earlier this year for Lifehack.org, "How fear of failure destroys success,"<sup>4</sup> where he notes just how vitally important failure's handmaidens, trial and error, are to achieving ultimate success:

Trial and error are usually the prime means of solving life's problems. Yet many people are afraid to undertake the trial because they're too afraid of experiencing the error. They make the mistake of believing that all error is wrong and harmful, when most of it is both helpful and necessary. Error provides the feedback that points the way to success. Only error pushes people to put together a new and better trial, leading through yet more errors and trials until they can ultimately find a viable and creative solution. To meet with an error is not to fail, but to take one more step on the path to final success. No errors means no successes either.

Savage goes on to illustrate various different ways that individuals and corporations allow fear of failure to block creative solutions to problems: a culture of perfection, clinging to past success, being a high achiever, or being unbalanced in any one direction (too over-achieving, too moral, too anything), and that finding a proper *balance* is the way out of this trap:

Everyone likes to succeed. The problem comes when fear of failure is dominant. When you can no longer accept the inevitability of making mistakes, nor recognize the importance of trial and error in finding the best and most creative solution. The more creative you are, the more errors you are going to make. Get used to it. Deciding to avoid the errors will destroy your creativity too.

Balance counts more than you think. Some tartness must season the sweetest dish. A little selfishness is valuable even in the most caring person. And a little failure is essential to preserve everyone's perspective on success.

We hear a lot about being positive. Maybe we also need to recognize that the negative parts of our lives and experience have just as important a role to play in finding success, in work and in life.

Savor these two of Savage's ideas, they are golden: 1) The more creative you are, the more errors you are going to make. Get used to it. Deciding to avoid the errors will destroy your creativity too. 2) We hear a lot about being positive. Maybe we also need to

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifehack/how-fear-of-failure-destroys-success.html>

recognize that the negative parts of our lives and experience have just as important a role to play in finding success, in work and in life. The key is to remain open to new ideas, methods, and experiences.

This applies to all aspects of business, but resonates especially strongly for me in how it relates to the naming process. In our own work here at Zinzin, we live in permanent trial and error mode, because we accept the fact that on every naming project, we will ultimately create hundreds of "failure" names that will lead us to the one great name that defines a successful outcome. Savage's description of trial-error-reiteration adroitly captures what our line of work entails. You can only find the perfect name by multiple rounds of experiment, play, questioning, red herrings, dead ends, trips down rabbit holes, self-criticism, debate, and chance. Be open to creative ideas in yourself and others, and embrace the *trial/error/failure/try again* process.

When you get knocked over by failure and fall down on your face, get up and repeat, over and over again. The good news is that once you make this process a habit, it becomes second nature and much easier to tolerate. Eventually you realize that the failures are not speed bumps on the road to success — they are actually *catalysts*, without which there wouldn't be any success.

# Escape The Groupthink Brainstorm & Go Deep

In an article in the New York Times, "The Rise of the New Groupthink,"<sup>5</sup> Susan Cain makes a strong argument against the rising tide of groupthink in our culture. This kind of "collaborative creativity" can readily be seen in the proliferation of group assignments in school, companies with open plan offices with no personal space, and, in the naming business, naming committees with too many members trying to collaboratively create a new brand name.

The problem is, for any kind of creative endeavor, groupthink doesn't work.

Research strongly suggests that people are more creative when they enjoy privacy and freedom from interruption. And the most spectacularly creative people in many fields are often introverted, according to studies by the psychologists Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Gregory Feist. They're extroverted enough to exchange and advance ideas, but see themselves as independent and individualistic. They're not joiners by nature.

One explanation for these findings is that introverts are comfortable working alone — and solitude is a catalyst to innovation. As the influential psychologist Hans Eysenck observed, introversion fosters creativity by "concentrating the mind on the tasks in hand, and preventing the dissipation of energy on social and sexual matters unrelated to work."

In other words, the social aspects of work might be beneficial and necessary to an individual's overall health, but they are not conducive to creative work and the development of new ideas. And "creative work" is something that should be required of everyone in an organization, not just so-called "creatives." Here is Apple co-founder and famous introvert Steve Wozniak describing engineers:

"Most inventors and engineers I've met are like me ... they live in their heads. They're almost like artists. In fact, the very best of them are artists. And artists work best alone .... I'm going to give you some advice that might be hard to take. That advice is: Work alone... Not on a committee. Not on a team."

The key for any company or organization is to find the right balance, to recognize that people need uninterrupted "alone time" to do their best work, though they and others in the organization can benefit from the collective energy of occasional group interaction. *Interaction* and exchange of ideas, not continuous *collaboration*, because,

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/15/opinion/sunday/the-rise-of-the-new-groupthink.html>

...it's one thing to associate with a group in which each member works autonomously on his piece of the puzzle; it's another to be corralled into endless meetings or conference calls conducted in offices that afford no respite from the noise and gaze of co-workers. Studies show that open-plan offices make workers hostile, insecure and distracted. They're also more likely to suffer from high blood pressure, stress, the flu and exhaustion. And people whose work is interrupted make 50 percent more mistakes and take twice as long to finish it.

Privacy also makes us productive, notes Cain. She references a study of 600 computer programmers at 92 companies called the Coding War Games that showed quantitatively that "what distinguished programmers at the top-performing companies wasn't greater experience or better pay, it was how much privacy, personal workspace and freedom from interruption they enjoyed." And creative solitude helps learning too, because an individual can work more on the things that challenge them, which is not an option in a group learning situation.

The flip side of deep, focused, solitary work is the corporate *brainstorming* session. We've seen this time and again in the naming industry, where brainstorming sessions are usually conducted by companies in-house, or by their advertising agency. The company or agency will ask a group of its "creatives" to work late one night, fueled by pizza, beer and Red Bull, and work together to *brainstorm* a new name. As you may have guessed, such a process rarely if ever generates the strongest, most powerful names.

Conversely, brainstorming sessions are one of the worst possible ways to stimulate creativity....decades of research show that individuals almost always perform better than groups in both quality and quantity, and group performance gets worse as group size increases. The "evidence from science suggests that business people must be insane to use brainstorming groups," wrote the organizational psychologist Adrian Furnham. "If you have talented and motivated people, they should be encouraged to work alone when creativity or efficiency is the highest priority."

The reasons brainstorming fails are instructive for other forms of group work, too. People in groups tend to sit back and let others do the work; they instinctively mimic others' opinions and lose sight of their own; and, often succumb to peer pressure. The Emory University neuroscientist Gregory Berns found that when we take a stance different from the group's, we activate the amygdala, a small organ in the brain associated with the fear of rejection. Professor Berns calls this "the pain of independence."

Simon Sinek has also weighed-in<sup>6</sup> on why the best ideas don't happen though groupthink, pointing out that brainstorming sessions only activate the conscious mind, not the subconscious mind. He notes that your rational brain can only access about two feet of information around you, while your unconscious brain can access the equivalent of eleven acres of information around you. This treasure trove of unconscious information is where *gut* decisions and *epiphanies* come from, and they just can't come out in the collective groupthink environment of a brainstorming session.

The only way to make brainstorming productive is to have individuals work alone on the problem at hand before and after the group work, and use the brainstorming session for communication, interaction and amplification of the individual ideas, rather than a mechanism for creating those ideas. There simply is no substitute for the deep thought of individual alone time away from all distractions.

One exception to the general shortcomings of groupthink is electronic collaboration at a distance, or so-called "crowdsourcing," where individuals working "alone together" have the potential to tap into the best of both worlds. In the rosier of such scenarios, individuals still have plenty of solitary creative time, which is then combined with focused bursts of remote group collaboration free from the negative dynamics that come with in-person group interaction. Cain notes that, "most humans have two contradictory impulses: we love and need one another, yet we crave privacy and autonomy," and finding the right balance is crucial for success:

To harness the energy that fuels both these drives, we need to move beyond the New Groupthink and embrace a more nuanced approach to creativity and learning. Our offices should encourage casual, cafe-style interactions, but allow people to disappear into personalized, private spaces when they want to be alone. Our schools should teach children to work with others, but also to work on their own for sustained periods of time. And we must recognize that introverts like Steve Wozniak need extra quiet and privacy to do their best work.

Companies should take heed of these findings and incorporate them into how they structure their workflow and work environments. In our own naming work we have always worked this way, as individuals pursuing ideas on our own, punctuated by regular, brief and focused sessions for discussion, argument, and collaboration, both internally and with our clients; then back to our private spaces for more deep thought.

If your company is staffed only with extroverts, it's time to hire some introverts, pronto, and give them the space they need to go deep. The extroverts will benefit too.

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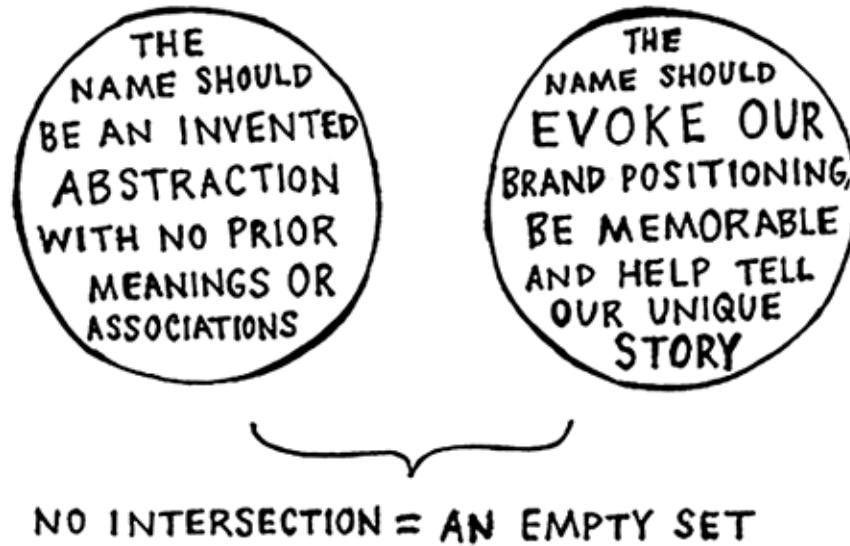
<sup>6</sup> <http://www.zinzin.com/branding/get-outside-of-yourself/>

# Five Steps to Avoid Defining an Empty Set in Your Brand Positioning



Image: Dave Walker, [The Cartoon Blog](#).

When naming, it is often tempting to create a very well-defined, buttoned-down and thorough brand positioning, rigidly specific down to the smallest detail. Such a positioning stance is often the outgrowth of a process in which competing client factions allow too many cooks into the kitchen and draft an overwhelming number of positioning "requirements" meant to satisfy each of those factions. This is a dangerous practice, as it often leads to the outcome of an empty set being created, as conflicting "rules" cancel each other out and leave a hollow space in which no possible name can exist, as in this example, exaggerated to make a point:



A sure way to spot when this demon rears its ugly head is if you find yourself or members of your team muttering, in reference to the search for the perfect name, "I'll know it when I see it." This is the kiss of death for a naming project, because it is highly likely that the impossible outcome of an empty set has been described, or the wrong filters are in place, or both. In such a situation, you could consider every word in the English language (Officially 1,013,913 as of January 1, 2012) as a potential name for your new company or product, plus another million invented or compound names, and still never "know it when you see it," for the simple reason that no name can satisfy a brand positioning framework that defines an empty set. Such a situation is the cause of most aborted naming attempts.

To transcend the "empty set" conundrum the first thing you need to do is make sure you have no contradictions in the brand positioning. As the example above shows, no name can satisfy the requirements that it be an "invented abstraction with no prior meanings" and simultaneously "evoke our brand positioning, be memorable and help tell our unique story." Another example of an empty set might be, "available for global trademark and exact match .com domain, be only one syllable, five letters max, easily understood and pronounceable in eastern as well as western languages, and yet be a common word that closely describes our brand position in our industry." Time to order up a new dictionary, a new language, or a new parallel universe. So the first step toward recovery is to recognize that you have a problem, and make some changes in your approach.

Here are five steps to freeing yourself from the prison of an empty set brand positioning:

1. Resist the urge to box your brand into a corner. Create a *cloud* of positioning attributes and know your fundamental story, but don't try to describe every little detail of the positioning and then expect to find a name that will align with all of them. You won't.
2. Understand that while it's true that a great name will map to and reinforce your brand positioning, such a name will also have the power to *inform* your brand positioning. It's a two-way street: brand positioning leads to a name, but the *perfect* name also influences the brand positioning moving forward. For example, a very similar brand positioning could have led to the names Yahoo! and Excite, but the brand positioning that came after the names were chosen was necessarily very, very different; in the former, very powerful with great marketing legs for years to come; in the latter, well, a me-too derivative long since out of business.
3. Open your minds. Rather than merely *describe* your brand positioning with a descriptive or experiential name, like your competitors do, consider creating a highly-memorable evocative name that strongly differentiates your brand from your competition by *demonstrating* your brand positioning rather than explaining it. The key is to move beyond the literal and into the metaphorical. Think Amazon, Virgin, Twitter, Coach, Caterpillar, Yahoo!, Oracle, Apple. That's not to say that great invented or experiential names aren't out there, they're just few and far between, so you have to work extra hard to identify them.
4. Evaluating names should be more like a Socratic dialog, not an exercise in democracy. Resist the urge to let everyone on your naming team, or your company, vote on the final name. Nobody's first choice will survive. The "winning" name will be the one that is most people's third choice, the one nobody loves but everyone can "live with." Great brands are not created from such a shrug of the shoulders. A vigorous debate is not only beneficial, it is often a requirement for creating a powerful name. And if half the team loves a name and half the team hates it, you're in a much better place than if you have immediate consensus one way or the other. When you adopt an amazing name, no matter how contentious the process may have been that got you there, the naysayers will eventually come around and embrace it—they always do. It just takes some people longer to understand the power of a truly different and memorable name that might at first be uncomfortable for them.
5. Informed outside council can be beneficial, while uninformed outside opinion can be damaging. In other words, if you are truly stuck in your naming process, you will likely benefit by hiring a naming agency (shameless plug here) to come in with a fresh perspective and get everyone on the team to see name development and brand positioning in a new light. The flip side is taking a short list of names to a focus group or other *uninformed* outside agent to solicit their opinions about the names. Doing so will almost certainly guarantee that the most unique and

powerful names will be killed off, and the weakest, most typical or conformist names will be celebrated. This is especially damning, of course, when you are attempting to position your brand as bold, adventurous, and fiercely independent, as it will lead you to a name that betrays all those fine aspirations.

During your naming project, as you *generate* → *iterate* → *regenerate* → and *reiterate* the name development process, keep the above points in mind and continue to make sure at every step of the way that you have not defined an empty set. Because if you have, you'll never find the perfect name, since you wouldn't know it if you saw it.

# Henry Miller's Eleven Commandments

*In the 1930s, Henry Miller<sup>7</sup> drew up a list of 11 commandments that he wrote for himself to follow in his career as a writer. We have annotated Miller's original commandments (in bold, below) with our observations about how each of them can be applied to various aspects of the naming process.*

1. **Work on one thing at a time until finished.** Keep your attention focused on the task at hand. Set aside time and space free from the distractions of the Internet, social media and telephones to concentrate on your naming project. In the words of Buckminster Fuller, "Thinking is a momentary dismissal of irrelevancies."
2. **Start no more new books, add no more new material to "Black Spring."** Recognize when a project is finished, and be prepared to move on.
3. **Don't be nervous. Work calmly, joyously, recklessly on whatever is in hand.** As we say in Manifesto numbers 13 and 14 (see below), naming should be fun and you have to set a positive tone.
4. **Work according to Program and not according to mood. Stop at the appointed time!** Another way to say this is to keep the project as objective as possible by staying focused on the brand positioning, not on subjective reactions to names.
5. **When you can't create you can work.** Don't wait for "inspiration." If you don't feel as if any good, creative names are resulting from your process at any given time, don't force it or stress out. Do some other related work to feed your fires: reading, research, making lists. Henry is right: you can't always create, but you can always work. And don't underestimate the value of hard work. To quote the late, great Cy Twombly: "When I work, I work very fast, but preparing to work can take any length of time."
6. **Cement a little every day, rather than add new fertilizers.** Diligence and perseverance. Try to make some kind of progress every day, or at least increase your understanding of the process.
7. **Keep human! See people, go places, drink if you feel like it.** Allow life and real world experience to inspire and inform your naming process. Don't get stuck in abstractions and ruts. Burn your thesaurus (don't worry, it'll still be there for you online when you really need it.) (See Manifesto #13, below).
8. **Don't be a draught-horse! Work with pleasure only.** See number three, above.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_Miller](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Miller)

9. **Discard the Program when you feel like it—but go back to it next day. Concentrate. Narrow down. Exclude.** Give yourself flexibility to grow and adapt, but keep bringing the focus back to the project and the brand positioning (see number four, above). As the project progresses, it should become ever more focused.
10. **Forget the books you want to write. Think only of the book you are writing.** Don't force all the great names in your head into the current project. Think only of the specific positioning of the current project, and make sure all names under consideration map strongly to that positioning.
11. **Write first and always. Painting, music, friends, cinema, all these come afterwards.** Naming comes first. After that, the rest is gravy, icing, spice, and all other food metaphors.

(Source of the 11 Commandments: Henry Miller on Writing<sup>8</sup> via Lists of Note<sup>9</sup>)

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0811201120/ref=as\\_li\\_ss\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=letofnot-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0811201120](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0811201120/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=letofnot-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0811201120)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.listsofnote.com/>

## Brands Learn It's Time To Get Real

We've been saying this for what seems like forever. In this savage economic climate, more and more businesses are realizing how important it is to get their branding right, and are looking for any way they can to add a few percentage points to their bottom lines. An article in the Washington Post, "Businesses find they can't grow without branding"<sup>10</sup>, highlights the trend in the Washington DC area:

In the Washington area, Honest Tea is far from alone in seeking a brand make-over. The business of image enhancement is heating up in the region — and not just among companies selling consumer products. Government contracting firms are adopting new nomenclatures that create buzz. Charities are changing their names to reflect new missions. Trade associations are updating their logos and tag lines to remain relevant to members.

We are seeing this shift happen all over, not just in Washington DC, and the key reason for it is the massive change that many markets are undergoing:

"Everything's changed," said Christie J. Susko, immediate past president of AMA DC, which recently changed its logo and tag line. "Resources have changed. Products have changed. Prices have changed. Business models have changed. People are spending money differently. [Some companies have] gone out of business and others have changed their value proposition to stay competitive.

"As a result," Susko added, "everybody is trying to figure out their place in the new market."

Be Real Get Honest One of the primary drivers of this trend is a big push toward "authenticity" — think of it as the "Get Real" movement. Ironically, the article leads off with the story of Honest Tea ditching its *old* tagline of "Get Real. Be Honest." For the beverage maker to really "Get Real," they had to ditch their old approach of *telling* people to get real, because true authenticity means never having to say you're authentic! (They were also honing their message after expanding into new markets thanks to new owner Coca-Cola.) The article speculates that the reason for this is the pervasiveness of media, social and otherwise, that will expose any corporate hypocrisy in an Internet heartbeat:

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/businesses-find-they-cant-grow-without-branding/2011/07/27/gIQRXLhII\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/businesses-find-they-cant-grow-without-branding/2011/07/27/gIQRXLhII_story.html)

These days consumers are driving the public perception of companies, offering their sometimes not-so-flattering reviews of products and services through blogs, Web sites and social media. Companies are responding to the public's demand for transparency; in this era of the 24/7 news cycle, consumers no longer are tolerating firms that represent one thing in their branding but demonstrate something entirely different in news coverage, experts say.

"There is so much information available to us and we can make up our own minds" about companies, said Susan Waldman, partner for strategic services at the Washington-based branding firm ZilYen. (Her business is thriving. The firm's revenue from March to May, she said, surpassed what it made during the entirety of 2010.)

"Now the whole company is really being charged with standing behind the values claimed in the marketplace," Waldman said. "Everything you do and say becomes part of what audiences see as your brand."

And of course, the top-level of any company's marketing will be their name:

A key element in a company's branding is what it calls itself. Business nomenclatures of the past were more straightforward; firms typically were named for their founders or the services they provided. Now names are much more creative — consisting of made-up words, atypical spellings and odd combinations of capital and lower-case letters: strEATS, QinetiQ, Opower, PopVox, 20/20 GeneSystems, JESS3. Today's names are designed to stand out, create buzz and reflect innovation.

Unfortunately, most such attempts, as the examples above show, fall short in their ability to stand out in an increasingly crowded marketplace where most companies are doing the same thing at the same time.

Authenticity, like a great name, is a quality your brand can only demonstrate, not explain. What you fail to demonstrate directly you have to explain, and that's called advertising. More and more, consumers are onto brands that try to use advertising to pull a fast one, and crave authentic brands.

When it comes to your name and primary messaging, keeping it real is a must, and something you just can't fake.

# Krafting a Failed Name: Mondelez, or How Not To Do Corporate Rebranding

Kraft Foods is separating its higher-growth global snacking business unit from its North American grocery division, so it needs a name for the new company. The process Kraft used to get that new name, and the rationalization of the name, make a great example of what *not* to do in a naming process.

The new corporate brand name, Mondelez International, is fraught with problems. As the New York Times DealBook blog mildly puts it<sup>11</sup>, "The move highlights the potential complications that come with corporate rebranding, especially when a company decides to make up a name out of whole cloth."

*Potential complications* is an understatement for the activity of launching a major company with a terrible name that nobody will remember. So how did a global giant like Kraft get into the position of adopting a weak, unmemorable and unpronounceable name for its new spinoff? They did it the old fashioned way — by (very large) committee: "Kraft said that the moniker came from submissions by more than 1,000 employees around the world, who suggested over 1,700 names." For a company that makes food products from recipes, you'd think they might have noticed that democratizing the naming process like this is a recipe for disaster. For example, let's say that we're going to have a free ice cream day for our 1000-employee company. Everybody can have as much ice cream as they want, but we can only get one flavor, so we need to reach a consensus on which flavor to serve. Will it be Cherry Garcia or Chunky Monkey? No, it will be either vanilla or chocolate (oh wait, some people have chocolate allergies ) — ok, vanilla it is.

Once Kraft had a process in place to guarantee that the name squeezed out the end of their soft-serve branding machine would be vanilla, all that remained was the justification, and here it comes:

The winner: Mondelez, cobbled together from submissions from a North American employee and a European one. It's a combination of "monde," the Latin word for "world," and "delez," a made-up word meant to suggest "delicious." Hence, "delicious world."

"Cobbled together" is right. The problem is, real people inhabiting the real world would never encounter a name like Mondelez and feel the warm glow of entering a "delicious world." And who says that the made-up "word" *delez* suggests "delicious"?

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11 Kraft, 'Mondelez' and the Art of Corporate Rebranding: <http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2012/03/21/kraft-mondelez-and-the-art-of-corporate-rebranding/>

You could make a better argument that it suggests "delays" or "deletes," as in, "Food you can't eat, so you should delete. Don't delay." Pardon the pigeon Esperanto. Better yet, Mondelez sounds like a slang term for oral sex in Russian. Delicious world, indeed! But since they manufacture "snacks," this connotation can only help improve brand recognition, at least among horny/hungry Russians. Score one for Kraft.

The next part of this process train-wreck is to trot out the CEO to perform, as if on cue, the Name Announcement Song & Dance, which Kraft dutifully obliges. Here is the marketing *robospeak* attributed to Irene B. Rosenfeld, the chairman and CEO of the new company:

"For the new global snacks company, we wanted to find a new name that could serve as an umbrella for our iconic brands, reinforce the truly global nature of this business and build on our higher purpose – to 'make today delicious.' Mondelez perfectly captures the idea of a 'delicious world' and will serve as a solid foundation for the strong relationships we want to create with our consumers, customers, employees and shareholders."

Our question for Ms. Rosenfeld is, when was the last time you entered a "strong relationship" with a brand that had a name like Mondelez? Would you even remember its name a week later?

Kraft need look no further than their own Nabisco brand cookie product, Oreo, for an example of an outstanding invented name that is warm, poetic, fun to say, memorable and meshes beautifully with the product it identifies. With the right process in place, Kraft could have created a winning brand, one that is less vanilla, and more Karamel Sutra. Then it really would have been a *Delicious World* after all.

Oh well. Kraft's loss creates an opening and opportunity for other companies that are less fearful of standing out from the crowd with a bold, memorable, powerful name.

# Jack Kerouac's List of 30 Beliefs and Techniques for Prose and Life (& Naming)

Jack Kerouac drew up a "List of 30 Beliefs and Techniques for Prose and Life<sup>12</sup>," which was "allegedly tacked on the wall of Allen Ginsberg's hotel room in North Beach a year before his iconic poem 'Howl' was written — which is of little surprise, given Ginsberg readily admitted Kerouac's influence and even noted in the dedication of *Howl and Other Poems* that he took the title from Kerouac," notes Brainpicker Maria Popova.

Kerouac's list is inspiring not just for writers, but for any kind of artist, and even for the process of name development. Each item in Kerouac's original list, below, is in italics, and each is followed by my comments relating it to the art of naming.

1. *Scribbled secret notebooks, and wild typewritten pages, for yr own joy.* Keep lots of notebooks, scraps, post-its and shreds with names, ideas, concepts. You never know when and how they may lead to the development of a name.
2. *Submissive to everything, open, listening.* Always. Very important. The world is speaking the name you are looking for, but if you aren't listening, you'll likely miss it.
3. *Try never get drunk outside yr own house.* Avoid getting drunk in general, but if you do, make sure you have a notebook with you (see #1).
4. *Be in love with yr life.* Yes. It's the only one you've got. Great advice beyond naming, and something Kerouac himself ultimately failed to uphold, but in the realm of naming, you must embrace the fact that you are a namer. Own it. Love it.
5. *Something that you feel will find its own form.* Trust your gut. Follow the glimmer of ideas, no matter how evanescent. They will lead to the "form" of names.
6. *Be crazy dumb saint of the mind.* Because it's a fine line between inspiration and madness. You have to push the limits to know where the limits are. Let wisdom wash over you—don't presume to already have it (you don't).
7. *Blow as deep as you want to blow.* Go deep into a name or idea and don't let anything hold you back.
8. *Write what you want bottomless from bottom of the mind.* Combine this with #1, above. Names will come from writing often, whether lists, stories, poems, blog

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<sup>12</sup> Source: University of Pennsylvania – <http://writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/kerouac-technique.html> – via Brain Pickings – <http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2012/03/22/jack-kerouac-belief-and-technique-for-modern-prose/>.

posts, or screeds of any sort. Keep writing, keep banging your fingers into keys and moving your pen over paper. Words will appear in great, blooming clusters, words that names are made from.

9. *The unspeakable visions of the individual.* Visions and other unnamables that nevertheless might lead to names. Just because something can't be described (named) doesn't mean you can't describe (name) it. You can. Try it.
10. *No time for poetry but exactly what is.* Poetry isn't a magic place you have to travel to or make time for. It is all around us all the time. It is exactly what is.
11. *Visionary tics shivering in the chest.* Exactly where great names often begin. You can almost feel them coming before they arrive, tickling your primordial amygdala limbic mind before your advanced cerebral cortex catches up and understands their value.
12. *In tranced fixation dreaming upon object before you.* Focus on the task at hand, meditate on the brand positioning that a name must map to. "Tranced fixation dreaming" the best way to describe this state combining search and receptivity (see #2) to new ideas.
13. *Remove literary, grammatical and syntactical inhibition.* All that can come later, when you're in editing mode. When developing names, start with no rules, then gradually introduce the most important one: that the name supports the brand positioning.
14. *Like Proust be an old teahead of time.* Step out of the linear flow of time. A name can come from any place, or any time, and the collision of disparate eras can be powerful in developing a name.
15. *Telling the true story of the world in interior monolog.* Turn the naming problem into a story and run through it in your mind over and over. Add other stories, and let the stories collide, like particles in an atom smasher. The birth of new names just might result.
16. *The jewel center of interest is the eye within the eye.* The best names have many layers of meaning, and you can drill deep into them and keep discovering new things.
17. *Write in recollection and amazement for yourself.* Draw on your memory and follow what makes you most passionate, obsessed and excited. Never fake your response to art—if you don't feel it, move on. But if something strikes you powerfully, follow it as far as it will take you.
18. *Work from pithy middle eye out, swimming in language sea.* Immerse yourself in words to the point of drowning—the words that coalesce into a life preserver to save you just might form your new name.

19. *Accept loss forever.* Not every idea works. Most, in fact, are "failures." Failures diligently explored can lead to success, so the only true failures are the failures that are abandoned. So accept failure and loss, and perhaps loss of sleep, into your naming process.
20. *Believe in the holy contour of life.* All of life is waiting for you when you are in need of a name, not just the dictionary and thesaurus. Believe in life and immerse yourself in it, following its winking clues.
21. *Struggle to sketch the flow that already exists intact in mind.* Great names are already flowing in your mind; the trick is to get them out into the light of consciousness without your editor brain and logic filters keeping them locked up out of sight. "Sketch the flow" is another way of saying, in the context of naming, "map-out the brand positioning with metaphors."
22. *Dont think of words when you stop but to see picture better.* Visualize the brand you are naming, and visualize how a name might be used. Try not to define the name at first with other, often limiting, words, but instead keep it pure in your vision.
23. *Keep track of every day the date emblazoned in yr morning.* You want to create space for free range roaming in the playground of your mind, but it's equally important to keep the process structured, to temper unbridled freedom with the constraint of process. Michelangelo said, "Art lives by constraint and dies of freedom." Stay focused on the big picture.
24. *No fear or shame in the dignity of yr experience, language & knowledge.* Don't think for a moment that you are not creative enough, or not up to the task, of creating a great name—you probably just have the wrong filters in place.
25. *Write for the world to read and see yr exact pictures of it.* You are not naming for the sake of naming, and brands don't exist in a vacuum. A name has to work in the real world, which means it should be more engaging and memorable than the names of your competition, and it should be inspiring to people.
26. *Bookmovie is the movie in words, the visual American form.* A picture may be worth a thousand words, but a great name can paint a thousand pictures in the minds of your audience.
27. *In praise of Character in the Bleak inhuman Loneliness.* Think of every great name added to the world as making the world a better place for all of us to live, and another flash of human connection illuminating the darkness.
28. *Composing wild, undisciplined, pure, coming in from under, crazier the better.* Start by following your gut, uninhibited, free, flowing (see #5 and #13, above).
29. *You're a Genius all the time.* Ginsberg may have been, but we're not. It never hurts, however, to think positive. Just don't get carried away with it. Ultimately a

name has to support the brand positioning and work in the real world, and no amount of fist-banging declarations that you are a "genius" will change that, or convince a skeptical client. Failure to understand this leads to delusion, and bad names. True genius is humble. Be resolute, but be humble.

30. *Writer-Director of Earthly movies Sponsored & Angeled in Heaven.* What you can put on your business card or website, if you want, once your angelic visions have been realized in live names that take the world by storm. In the meantime, keep it to yourself, get inspired, and work hard.

# Academic Research Study Shows the Market Appeal of Evocative Names

In 2005 a very interesting research paper by Barbara E. Kahn, a marketing professor at the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business, and Elizabeth G. Miller, a marketing professor at Boston College, was published in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. Titled, "Shades of Meaning: The Effect of Color and Flavor Names on Consumer Choice," the study presents persuasive evidence that "consumers" (see Manifesto item number 35, below, for why we don't like that word) react positively to evocative names that are not descriptive, news to the researchers, perhaps, but not news to us. There is a good article about the study published on the Wharton website, *Florida Red or Moody Blue: Study Looks at Appeal of Off-beat Product Names*<sup>13</sup>, which we summarize here.

Barbara Kahn says, "The research may have strong implications for Internet marketers whose customers cannot see a product first-hand and tend to rely more on written descriptions when making purchases." What she means by this is that there is no *physical* context to products in the virtual world, and thus the emotional associations created by language have even more importance.

In studies of jellybeans and colored sweaters, the researchers found an overall positive reaction to names that gave little information about what a flavor or product color was really like, such as Millennium orange or Snuggly white. "People jumped to the conclusion that the marketer must be telling this information for some reason," says Kahn. "They said, 'Even though I don't understand the reason, it has to be something good because marketers wouldn't tell me something that isn't good.' When they stopped and spent time on the name the assumption was that it was positive."

Kahn and Miller focus on the idea that people may attach "positive associations" to evocative words like "millennium" and "snuggly," but we think what's really going on here is that, in the context of jelly beans, those words are new, unusual, and unexpected, and thus spark an emotional connection. For a tech company, "Millennium Group" would be an expected name, and thus easily forgotten, and the same with the name "Snuggly Wash" for a detergent. But for jelly beans, they resonate, not because people feel that marketers "must be telling this information for some reason," but simply because they are different, and the human mind craves difference.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/florida-red-or-moody-blue-study-looks-at-appeal-of-off-beat-product-names/>

Kahn was drawn to a study of unusual product names when she began to notice nail polish being sold under color names — such as Gunpowder — that gave no information about what the polish would actually look like. Another example: the line of Gatorade Frost flavors that are sold with hard-to-imagine flavor names such as Glacier Freeze, Riptide Rush and Cascade Crash. Perhaps the ultimate in ambiguity, says Kahn, has been achieved by Crayola which uses names such as Razzmatazz and Tropical Rain Forest to describe crayons, which are nothing else if not a color. "With the nail polish there was something edgy or revolutionary," she says. "When Crayola comes out with names that don't describe the color of crayons, that is just astonishing."

It shouldn't be *that* surprising. Colors are the ultimate "virtual" product, where individual units of the physical product being sold — crayons, markers, paint — are all exactly alike, with the only variation being the color. In such cases the name of the color becomes vital in distinguishing that product from a competitor's product with the same or similar color. (See our blog post, *Colorful naming done right*<sup>14</sup>, about a 2011 New York Times article all about the explosion of very creative, evocative color names in the house paint market.)

Here's how the researchers conducted their experiment:

Gauging the effects of such names on consumer behavior is hard because so many other variables come in to play. So Kahn and Miller constructed controlled experiments of product names that were divided into four categories: Common, which are typical or unspecific, such as dark green or light yellow; Common Descriptive, which are typical and specific, such as pine green or lemon yellow; Unexpected Descriptive, which are atypical, but specific such as Kermit green or Rainslicker yellow; and Ambiguous, which are atypical and unspecific, such as Friendly green or Party yellow.

In an initial experiment testing flavor names, 100 undergraduates were asked to complete an unrelated questionnaire on a computer. After finishing the questionnaire at the computer, the students were told they could take some jellybeans. The jellybeans were in six cups each with a sign attached listing the flavor. Half the subjects saw jellybean names that were common descriptives: blueberry blue, cherry red, chocolate brown, marshmallow white, tangerine orange and watermelon green. The other half saw flavors with ambiguous names: Moody blue, Florida red, Mississippi brown, white Ireland, Passion orange and Monster green. Researchers observed that the less common names were more popular.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.zinzin.com/observations/2011/colorful-naming-done-right/>

As part of the experiment, some subjects were distracted by questions about the computer survey as they selected their jellybeans. In those cases, there was no preference for the unusually named flavors. That suggested that the decision to go with the less common name is a cognitive response indicating a person puts at least some thought into the decision.

Aha! There is the key: *the decision to go with the less common name is a cognitive response indicating a person puts at least some thought into the decision* — unexpected evocative and metaphorical names require a person to put some thought into "decoding" them, and the result is that a strong new memory is formed. This is why evocative names are so much more memorable than descriptive names; why "Amazon" is memorable and "Book World" is not. This is called "incongruity theory," and was also tested specifically by the researchers as part of this study. Incongruity theory posits that, "people make judgments by evaluating new encounters against existing expectations. When encounters are incongruent with prior expectations, individuals put in more effort to resolve the incongruity." Again, we say a resounding "YES!" — a primary reason for the power of unexpected names is that the effort required to "resolve the incongruity" cements a name in memory.

...if the name is uninformative because it is atypical, consumers will search for the reason the particular adjective was selected as described by incongruity theory. The result of this additional elaboration is increased satisfaction with the product." Kahn says some consumers seem to enjoy figuring out the names and feel smart when an obscure, but clever name clicks in their mind.

As the researchers note in their paper, "When consumers encounter an unfamiliar name which is counter to their expectation that the marketer would be providing a familiar name, they try to determine how the adjective describes the color/flavor. If they discover the connection, the consumer may congratulate himself for solving the problem, resulting in positive affect. The most positive affect should result when the name is mildly incongruent."

Although she did not test for it, Kahn says there is probably a point where strong incongruity would backfire, leaving consumers frustrated with meaningless names and leading to negative product response.

Yes, there is such a point, and that point is when a name, no matter how potentially interesting and powerful in and of itself, is too far removed from the brand positioning of the product, company or service. To be effective, names have to map to and reinforce the brand positioning — if they "go rogue" and fail to do that, they are then just

perceived as random. People, ultimately, enjoy and identify with stories, and mapping to a well-defined brand positioning is how to Tell A Good Story with a name.

This is a fascinating research study that we believe validates what we have observed anecdotally and have put into practice for years. The researchers, however, come up a little short in their conclusion:

Kahn says the use of odd names seems to work best in products that rely on the senses, such as food or fashion, and would probably not work in a high-stakes product category such as healthcare or financial services. And at some point, she says, the advantage of an odd or unexpected name will wear off. "Over time, people get used to it. I don't think people have this reaction to Gatorade Frost anymore," she says. "It isn't an effect that's going to last forever unless the company keeps coming up with new names."

We beg to differ. Just look at the success we've had creating memorable, lasting brand names in the two sectors Kahn mentions, *Healthcare/Medical/Pharma Names*<sup>15</sup> and *B2B/Enterprise/Industrial Names*<sup>16</sup> which includes the financial sector. The strongest, most powerful names work over time not by conforming to a temporary trick of perception, but by tapping into the collective memory and imagination, and creating an emotional bond with individual people that remains long after the Millennium orange or Snuggly white has been used up.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/healthcare-medical-pharma-names/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/b2b-enterprise-industrial-names/>

# The Zinzin Naming & Branding Manifesto

This Manifesto represents a distillation of our core philosophy about naming and branding. Welcome to the conversation.

## 1. Let there be names.

T.S. Eliot wrote that the world will end with a whimper, not a bang. Perhaps. But it began most evocatively with a Big Bang. Did the Big Bang know itself by that name as it was happening? Doubtful – the name came much later. In our world today, however, everything begins with a name. As you embark on the adventure of naming your company or product, you have the opportunity to create a Big Bang or a little whimper. Do the right thing – make a Big Bang.

## 2. Grunts, squeals & crude vocalizations.

Communication began with grunts and squeals, crude vocalizations, painted images and a lot of hand waving. From this names evolved to identify the bison to be hunted or the ideal cave for shelter and ceremony. Names are the beginning of language, and from language sprang culture and civilization. But it all began with a name, and it's a good bet that the first name was probably "I". *I am hungry. I want you. I need a new name for my cave painting business. The first "iBrand."*

## 3. Name, rank and serial number.

For too many people and companies, a name is merely an identifier, a functional string of letters or numbers with little brand value. This is the baseline, primordial meaning and function of a name. As Wittgenstein puts it, "A name cannot be dissected any further by means of a definition: it is a primitive sign." The question is, what more can a name do for you? Quite a few things, actually, once you move beyond the primitive notion that names are merely descriptive, functional signs.

## 4. Language is alive and on the move.

The way we write and speak today would have made people living in the 17th century, never mind Neanderthals, think us aliens from a far off galaxy. Things change, culture changes, languages are born and die, names come and go – today's "Google" is not your grandfather's "International Business Machines."

If you're looking for stability, go somewhere else. Language is on the move. It is a living, breathing organism, always changing, morphing, evolving. Don't fear this change – revel in it.

## 5. Language is dirty.

Language is messy. It is governed by rules that are often broken and riddled with exceptions that give it life. In order to create the best possible name for a company, product, baby, horse, character, or other, you have to be willing to do anything and go anywhere with language. Nothing is sacred. Language is alive, and life is messy.

When mucking about with language, don't be afraid to get your hands dirty.

## 6. Language is dead, long live language.

Language is the fruit fly's view of evolution – rapid change, mutation, morphogenesis. It is capable of being influenced, molded, formed, deformed and reformed before our eyes and ears. It is a mutant made to be torn asunder and reconfigured.

As William S. Burroughs wrote, "Language is a virus from outer space." We all have the capacity to be language biologists, creating new life from the wreckage of old text.

## 7. Born of science, transformed into art.

Great names are born from a specific process approaching science in its rigor, but the result is pure art. From competitive analysis to brand strategy, positioning, name development, trademark prescreening, linguistic connotation screening, name evaluation and adoption, there's much more to successful naming than pizza, beer, a thesaurus and frenetic whiteboard scribbling. The goal of all this hard work is an

evocative name with the power to set minds reeling, ignite conversations, spur involvement, create brand loyalty, and become embedded in memory.

## 8. Does the carpet match the drapes?

We talk a lot about brand positioning and how important it is, so let's define our terms. Simply put, the positioning of a brand is the set of core messages the brand demonstrates to the world, through tone, personality, emotion and narrative. So a better way to think about your task is in these terms: you are not naming a company or product – you are instead naming the *positioning* of a company or product. Once you determine the brand positioning, only consider names that map strongly to that positioning. In fact, any names you consider *must* support the brand positioning in order to be successful.

## 9. Slay dragon, heal earth, reach nirvana.

What feelings do you want your target audience to associate with your company or product? Do you want them feel that they are creative, "outside the box" individualists (Apple)? Part of a large, connected tribe (Facebook)? Empowered to push themselves beyond what they think they are physically capable of (Nike)? Which archetypes – The Hero, The Great Mother, The Mentor, The Guardian, The Herald, The Shadow, The Trickster – does your brand most closely align with? Discover the epic ideas behind your brand and they will lead to your unique story and positioning.

## 10. Show me, don't tell me.

Great names demonstrate your brand positioning. Weak names force you to explain your brand positioning, and that's called advertising. It is very expensive, and not nearly as effective as demonstrating. Bear this in mind when considering the cost of a naming project; money saved now may cost you much more in future advertising expenses.

## 11. Don't be hogtied by arbitrary filters.

If the perfect name for your product is "Blue," but you have a naming convention that only considers geometric shapes and sounds, not colors, then you have an arbitrary filter in place that is limiting the names you can even consider. The only filter that matters is the *Supports The Positioning* filter – all other filters, like "the name needs to be serious" or "it should start with a letter A" are arbitrary, exclusionary, and will lead you into a morass of bad name choices.

## 12. You can get it if you really want.

Clients often say to us that they got stuck when trying to name a company or product themselves because they are "not creative enough." We tell them, no, you are just as creative as us or anyone else, but your problem is that you have the wrong filters in place. The key is to focus on the *positioning* of your brand, and then look for names that best support that positioning, being careful not to filter out potential naming directions or, conversely, to allow anything and everything through.

## 13. When was the last time you enjoyed naming?

While there are definitely parts of a naming project that can be hard, challenging work – trademark screening, due-diligence research, linguistic connotation screening, domain checking, etc. – the actual name generation, discussion and deliberation should be engaging, thought-provoking, cathartic, stimulating, argumentative, enlightening, and just plain fun. You are creating a name that ideally will function as a very concise poem and catch fire out in the wider world. It's a rush.

And yes, naming should be fun.

## 14. Misery is no mother.

Just because naming should be fun, doesn't mean it always is. But it's important that you have an open mind and allow yourself to be alive to the possibilities of what a name can do. You have to set a positive tone for this exercise right from the start – if you're stuck in a miserable naming rut and the experience seems like torture, realize that you are doing something wrong, and change your approach. Companies and products are not born from misery or ennui, and neither are the best names.

## 15. In celebration of all the milquetoast mousey wimps.

When naming, it never works to act out of fear. If you *want* to blend in with the competition and go unnoticed by the public at large, that's easy enough to achieve. But if you are positioning your company as a bold, adventurous risk-taking revolutionary, and you are afraid to adopt a name that supports such bold positioning, then your brand is in trouble — the public will see through your attempts to be "bold" if you lead with a weak name. So don't wimp out; let your name be as powerful as your vision.

## 16. The risky business of risking business.

When naming, companies often make a fundamental mistake about the nature of risk. The faulty assumption is that they need a descriptive name in order to "describe what they do," or what their product does, because they "don't have a huge marketing budget" to do this describing. In other words, an evocative name that doesn't "describe what they do" is considered too "risky."

This kind of thinking is prevalent across all industries, and it's also completely wrong. That's because a powerful name will create brand awareness, get the press to write about it, generate word-of-mouth buzz, engage with your audience and convert them to fanatic devotees of your brand. The generic descriptive name, on the other hand, will drown in a sea of sound-alike clones, and you'll end up having to pay a lot more money for advertising in a vain attempt to get the brand noticed by your glazed-over audience.

It may seem counter-intuitive, but it's true: in terms of the bottom line, "safe" names are risky and it's the "edgy" names that are actually a much safer choice, because of what they can do for your brand and the value they'll create.

## 17. Own the conversation.

The greatest brands are emotionally engaging, thought-provoking, absolutely original and tend to upend industries. They are not me-too wannabes, struggling to get a word in edgewise. Rather, they own the conversation in their market. This kind of dominance is what product developers aspire to, but sadly the naming of a revolutionary product or company often gets short shrift. Don't let that happen to you. A name can and should dominate an industry as much as a company or product. Aim high.

## 18. Let your freak flag fly.

It's a very simple calculus: if your competitors are all doing the same thing, then you will stand out if you do something different. And the first and most visible point of differentiation is with your name. That's why every naming project should begin with a thorough understanding of the competitive landscape. Look for all the obvious and subtle ways in which your competitors do and say the same thing, and then find a new, uncharted place to plant your flag.

## 19. Burn your thesaurus.

Consulting a thesaurus is the first stop on the naming train for most people, who think that finding the right synonym will lead to the perfect name. It won't, because it's already been done to death. Go deep instead – immerse yourself in art, read poetry and literature, study science. If you want an uncommon name, surround yourself with uncommon sources. Each competitor of yours that chooses a boringly "appropriate" name from a thesaurus is doing you a great favor.

## 20. Turbulent seas.

We live in a culture with so many signals coming at us so quickly, that most messages, including brand names, just get buried in the avalanche of tweets, calls to action, toll-free numbers, friend requests, dinner conversations, infomercials, podcasts, IMs, talking heads, talking points, advertorials and webinars. Everyone is in a hurry all the time, with advertisers and content providers often accelerating their signals to stay "up to speed" and lodge their nuggets of information into our minds before competing messages can take root. In this cultural feeding frenzy, individual messages can easily be lost. Notice an opportunity here?

## 21. Shelter from the storm.

The key to getting noticed in the turbulent sea of cultural messages is not to speed up, but to slow down. If your name can disrupt someone's ordinary routine, they will stop and pay attention. Perhaps only for a few seconds, but sometimes that's all it takes to create an initial engagement with a brand. In a world where everything is fast, it's only natural that slowing down perception can be a major point of differentiation.

## 22. A word that paints a thousand pictures.

Old cliches never die, but they can often be turned inside-out. So while it's true that a picture might be worth a thousand words, a great name is a word or two that can paint a thousand pictures in the minds of your audience. If you want proof of this, hand a few leading names over to your graphics team to play around with. If they come back to you with, "We had so many ideas for what we could do with this one," it's likely a strong name.

## 23. I yam what I yam.

Keep your names, messaging and language real. Don't talk down to people. Don't insult the intelligence of your customers by condescending to them. Be real, genuine, honest, transparent, helpful, understanding, and authentic — you can't fake it, and you can't advertise it. You must *demonstrate* these qualities, and since a name is the most prominent part of a company's brand image, you have to begin by not accepting empty, phony language into your company or product names.

## 24. Difruhnt, but not *that* different.

If your name is different for the sake of being different or extreme in any way just for the sake of being extreme, then it is doomed. The most powerful names are those that best support the brand positioning, no matter what, and depending on the circumstances, a name might be "extreme" or it might not. If your name is trying too hard to be different just in order to stand out, it won't — it will blend in with all the other names that are also trying too hard, and failing, to stand out. *Vive la différence.*

## 25. 1.39 million very unique solutions.

When creating a brand name or any collateral messaging, avoid vacant, overused words like "solutions." A quick web search will confirm that you can find a solution for nearly every problem, except perhaps for the problem of having too many "solutions." Other empty vessels include "network," "business," "business solutions," "leading provider" ("leading" anything, for that matter), or the ultimate, "a leading provider of business solutions." Search that last phrase in Google, in quotes, and weep (1.39 million tears).

## 26. Beware of geeks bearing gifts.

Beware "experts" who cloak their methodology in the jargony garb of fancy proprietary "black box" naming "solutions." Naming is hard work, and to do it right requires focus, passion and persistence, but rocket surgery it is not. If a consultant has a rigorous process for creating names, they shouldn't be afraid to share that with the whole world. You're better off hiring a couple bright high school students than an MBA wielding a Magic 8-Ball.

## 27. Visualize your arch rival's smirk.

When evaluating the names on your shortlist, perform this little thought experiment: imagine that your fiercest competitor has just re-branded, and their new name is one of the names you are considering (try it with each name).

Which of the names would drive you most crazy with envy when, as you visualize it to the fullest, the smug CEO of Arch Rival, Inc., unveils their amazing new name to the world, the press writes stories about it, the blogosphere lights up, and the social media channels buzz like caffeinated honeybees? Conjure up as much painful detail as you can – really wallow in it.

This exercise will very quickly point the way to the best name on your list. And if none of the names would bother you if launched by a competitor, then go back to the drawing board until you have a name that does. It is often easier to imagine a competitor choosing a particular name than your own company choosing it, because the Arch Rival name adoption fantasy is divorced from your own internal debates and politics.

## 28. Focus groups can't save you now.

Many a troubled naming project began with a brainstorming session, but it's possible to do brainstorming right and add value to your naming process. Use this opportunity to get outside of yourself and hear divergent opinions; avoid being restricted by internal naming filters, preconceptions, or office politics; consider suggestions as concepts as much as potential names; and don't get emotionally invested in any given name before it has been properly trademark screened. A well-run brainstorming session can give everyone on your team the discourse and information needed to propagate, nurture and support strong names.

## 29. Like snowflakes in a blizzard.

Invented names made from morphemic mashups are often praised for being "completely unique, unlike anything else that is out there." While this might be technically true, such names are only unique in the same way that every snowflake is unique; in a blizzard, however, the uniqueness of an individual snowflake disappears. The same thing happens when "unique" mashup names join the real world *brand blizzard* – they vanish from sight, indistinguishable from one another.

## 30. Sibilants, plosives & fricatives oh my.

The lesson of snowflakes is to never confuse structural uniqueness – the "genetic code" of an individual name, its unique sequence of letters – with semantic uniqueness, its "uniqueness of meaning." Any name has meaning on some level – witness the linguist's parade of sibilants, plosives and fricatives that often accompanies a new name unveiling. The trick is to create names that are *meaningful*, not just names that have meaning.

## 31. Measure your ingredients carefully.

One issue to resolve when looking at a product naming strategy is when and to what extent does it make sense to engage in *ingredient branding* – naming individual technology components, such as GM's "OnStar" navigation system, or PCs with "Intel Inside." This is a tricky and nuanced area of branding to get right, and to avoid brand dilution it is important to strike a balance and only name ingredients when it makes sense to turn them into powerful sub-brands. Don't go on a naming spree just for the hell of it.

## 32. Frozen in the amber of brand equity.

When a successful brand has years of positive history and stories behind it, that is known as *brand equity*, which is something to be treasured and nurtured. But if a brand has been struggling, has grown tired, or has been damaged, its brand equity might better be described as *baggage*. If you have a successful brand in spite of a poor name, a new, powerful name can only help, and your customers will gladly follow your lead. But if

your brand has fallen on hard times, then you have no real brand equity to worry about – you've got nothing to lose, and you're free to reinvent the brand.

### 33. Got them domain domination blues.

Don't be discouraged by the difficulty of securing a domain name, and don't let domains dictate your choice of names. It's far better to have a great brand name with a compound word modified domain than a weak name with an exact-match domain. Thanks to Google and social media, your brand can be easily discovered regardless of its Web address. The brand should always have priority over the domain name; the only exception being Internet pure-play companies, where the brand and the domain are one.

### 34. We don't need no stinking demographics.

It's not enough to just "produce" products for "consumers" to consume. You need to foster engagement with your audience. Live in the big world and be a part of it, treat individuals with consideration, and be open, transparent and helpful. That includes creating brand names that respect your audience's intelligence, are entertaining, memorable, and add value to the culture. Never forget that it's individual people, not demographics, who buy your products. People like you.

### 35. Rise up, zombie mall rats, rise!

The word "consumer," meant to describe your audience or the people who buy your products, is demeaning and should be banished. In the old days it made sense: you put out a product, advertised it, and then the "consumers" would come along, shell out their money, and consume your product. Today, the pool of people who mindlessly "consume" brands is ever shrinking. With so much competition, people expect a deeper emotional connection and dialog with brands. Ignore this at your peril.

### 36. Tell a good story.

Stories are how we connect with each other, and how people become emotionally engaged with brands. Successful brands tell the most and the most compelling stories. Since your name is the face of your brand, names that tell stories are much more powerful than names that don't. Part of that story value comes from what is inherent in a name before you adopt it, and part of that value comes after, with the stories you create and invest in your brand.

Storytelling never ends — it's how you turn a name that might belong to any company or product into a brand that can only belong to you.

Epilogue. Coda. Last words. And a call to action.

Great names are not a given. They don't just happen. They have to be created, advocated for, argued about, pushed through corporate resistance. They tend to polarize naming committees, who are adept at coming up with powerful and persuasive arguments why they should be rejected. All valid reasons why there are so few really outstanding brand names. But also an opportunity.

We created this Manifesto to empower everybody who is interested in creating powerful names. It is a living, breathing document that we will revise and update whenever we have more to say. We invite you to join the conversation and help bring great names into the world.

*To be continued...*

# Selected Naming Case Studies

On the following pages is a selection of Zinzin naming case studies. You can read all case studies in the Portfolio section of our website: <http://www.zinzin.com/work/>.

View by category:

**All Company Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/all-company-names/>

**All Product Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/all-product-names/>

**All Service Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/all-service-names/>

**B2B/Enterprise/Industrial Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/b2b-enterprise-industrial-names/>

**Consumer Product Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/consumer-product-names/>

**Education/Training:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/education-training/>

**Electronics Hardware:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/electronics-hardware/>

**Entertainment Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/entertainment-names/>

**Food / Beverage Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/food-beverage-names/>

**Healthcare/Medical/Pharma Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/healthcare-medical-pharma-names/>

**Hotel/Resort Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/hotel-resort-names/>

**Technology Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/technology-names/>

**Television Network Names:**

<http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/television-network-names/>

# Éclair

**PROJECT:** Name a natural body care brand to reflect a fresh, sophisticated, and *tasty* “luxury for everyone” brand positioning.

**ECLAIR:** An oblong cream puff. Origin: from French *éclair* “flash of lightning,” so named because it is eaten quickly (in a flash).

**BRAND POSITION:** We were hired to name a new natural body care brand with a straightforward, powerful mission: “We believe that everybody deserves to have access to luxurious body care products that are also natural, efficacious and affordable.” All of the company’s products are non-GMO verified, gluten free, soy free, cruelty free and vegan, and are made in their own facility in the USA.

The name we created, *Éclair*, is perfect for this skincare and personal body care brand. *Éclair* is a fun yet very elegant name that works on multiple levels. As a delicious cream puff, the name maps perfectly to the concept that these natural personal body care products are so safe for your body that you could eat them. Phonetically, *Éclair* evokes *clarity*, and thus purity, illumination, and enlightenment. And the accented French spelling reinforces the *luxuriousness* of the brand.

The name *Éclair* accomplishes this brand positioning magic while remaining grounded in a word that is common enough for everyone to know in its humble pastry form. The oscillation between quotidian and sophisticated, creamy and illuminated generates creative friction that gives this brand great power and resonance.

*Éclair* Naturals. You. Naturally.



# Zeo

**PROJECT:** Name a suite of consumer banking services.

**ZEO:** An invented name, playing off “neo” and “Zeno,” the Greek philosopher famed for his paradoxes.



*Choice when you need it.*

**BRAND POSITIONING:** TCF, a national bank holding company with 342 branches in seven states, hired us to name a new suite of consumer banking services. The suite is designed to make managing your money faster and easier, and includes a prepaid debit card, check cashing, a savings account, money transfers, bill payments, and money orders. This suite of products is designed to fit into the customer’s rhythm of life, as they will be able to satisfy their financial needs with just one convenient resource, when and where they need it. Definitely not the same old tired and restrictive financial services offering.

The positioning for this disruptive brand was all about freedom, convenience, control, simplicity, and ease of use, and the name itself had to be cool, hip, and techy, yet casual and approachable. That’s were Zinzin came it. Our name for this financial product, ZEO, evokes a new (“neo”), empowering, and aspirational approach to personal finance. ZEO is very short and sweet, with a smooth, fun, energetic, and friendly vibe. It is also *verbable*: *ZEO it. ZEO me some cash. I just ZEO’d my bills.* Above all, ZEO is warm, approachable, and supportive, like the ideal financial advisor: *Me and my ZEO. ZEO is always with me. ZEO’s got my back.* Looking for all basic banking services in one place at a time that’s convenient for your busy life? Get ZEO.



# Ember

**PROJECT:** Name an advanced temperature adjustable mug and the company behind it and future temperature control products.

**EMBER:** A small, glowing piece of coal or wood, as in a fire.

The logo for the brand "ember" is displayed in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters are a dark red or maroon color. The 'e' is slightly larger than the other letters, and the 'b' has a distinctive shape with a rounded bottom.

**BRAND POSITION:** Clay Alexander came to us with an amazing product, a sleek and beautiful new kind of travel mug being designed by the famed product design agency Ammunition. The product features advanced technology and a Bluetooth-connected smartphone app to set your ideal beverage temperature and to keep it there. But equally important, the technology is hidden and the experience of using the product seamless, no different than using a “normal” travel mug. Only better. Much better.

We helped create the name Ember for this breakthrough new mug and the company that will produce it and other temperature-controlled products in the future. Ember has great connotations of warmth, heat, and of keeping the flame alive. Also portability — the ember that you keep safe to be able to start a new fire at a different time or place. Sometimes just a few degrees can make the biggest difference in how something tastes. Ember is here to make sure your drink tastes exactly the way you like it.



# Pivot

**PROJECT:** Name a new entertainment and social action television network that will air feature documentaries, reality TV, drama series, variety shows and an open source talk show.



**PIVOT:** Beyond just turning and rotating, pivot is the one central thing that something — maybe

everything — depends upon. It can be a structured course correction or a re-alignment of priorities. Pivot is all about thinking on your feet, adaptation and informed change. Also connotes *pivotal*, as in being of critical, essential importance.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The Pivot brand is empathetic, and connotes the dance of collaborators — auteurs and audience — learning to work together, to understand and inspire each other. The Pivot network doesn't strong-arm or browbeat you, it uses compelling, entertaining stories to get the audience to gently pivot in their thinking, and to inspire them to action.

Explaining the thinking behind the new network's name and brand position, Pivot president Evan Shapiro says that "the world is on a path right now, but there are many different paths that we can choose. We're not necessarily saying which one's the right one, but we know where we're headed right now is not working. So it's time to shift, and it's time to pivot."<sup>17</sup>

The world is changing, and Pivot will be right there in the middle of that change. And with its innovative digital distribution strategy, Pivot may just turn the television industry upside down as well. The name Pivot is perfect for this ambitious network that is both *television* and *post-television*. The old ways of thinking, acting and relating to each other and the world are not working anymore. It's time to Pivot.

Pivot. It's your turn.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://realscreen.com/2013/03/28/pivots-shapiro-we-are-a-general-entertainment-network/>

# Anthology

**PROJECT:** Create a new name for Poachable, an anonymous career matchmaking company and service.

**ANTHOLOGY:** A published collection of poems or other pieces of writing. A published collection of songs or musical compositions issued in one album.

Anthology;

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Poachable came to us with a unique naming project when they ran into trademark issues with their name. But the company was also broadening the scope of its offerings, and their visionary CEO, Tom Leung, understood that the trademark issue was a perfect catalyst to establish a new brand that better reflected the company's vision going forward. It was no longer just about the narrow function of enabling companies to "poach" top talent from other firms. While anonymous job exploration is still a big part of what their service does, the company will be adding lots of exciting new career optimizing features and services in the future that will take their platform to a whole new level – well beyond simply being *poachable*. Tom and his crew believe that the world would be a better place if everyone were in their best fitting job all the time, and that they are the ones to make that happen by changing the way careers and work are managed.

The new name we developed, Anthology, is a great metaphor for this epic, iconic and page-turning career and recruitment platform. Anthology is a collection of the unique, individual stories that each candidate and recruiter contributes to this collaborative ecosystem. The typical job listings website is like a short story; Anthology is much bigger than that, and will be there with you through every plot twist, storyline, and chapter, providing you with the big picture narrative you need to make more informed career decisions. Anthology conveys the company's long-term vision of helping everyone in the world achieve the most amazing career story possible. We also created the tagline, *Careers Reimagined*, which further reinforces both the world in which Anthology operates and the company's vision of changing the conversation in that world.

Anthology. Careers Reimagined.

# Clutch

PROJECT: Rebrand a business vendor research firm and website that has published research and reviews of B2B companies in over 50 markets and is poised for rapid growth.



CLUTCH: Essential in a critical situation: *He is a good man in the clutch*. A collection of things or persons to be handled together. Slang: great, awesome, cool.

BRAND POSITIONING: SourcingLine, a research firm that offers independent, quantitative analysis on leading services firms in support of procurement decisions, came to us with two requirements for their re-branding initiative: 1) Develop a killer brand name to replace their current *vaguely descriptive wait till we get funding camel-case mashup placeholder solution*; and 2) make sure that all names presented have exact-match .com or .co domain names that are parked and available for purchase.

For the company that delivers the go-to source of actionable business intelligence on B2B service companies, we *came through in the clutch*, with Clutch, a name that maps perfectly to the company's hybrid approach to vendor sourcing: a blend of what top research firms provide at a high price point with the cost (free) and ease of use of consumer review sites and apps. The name Clutch maps perfectly to the brand proposition that this is the *driving mechanism* that connects people with the best in class services that they seek, a deep resource for business intelligence that comes through for companies *in the Clutch* to deliver the best B2B service providers. Also, the ".co" top-level domain further reinforces that this is all about connecting companies to do business together. Clutch. Firms that deliver.

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## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL:

"The Zinzin team got our strategy and competitive environment immediately. They then elevated our thinking about our brand and provided a range of great naming options. What more could you ask?"

—Founder, Clutch

*Several of our fantastic clients have been interviewed by Clutch researchers for reviews about their experience working with us, which you can read in full on our Clutch profile page – <https://clutch.co/profile/zinzin> – or download a nicely-formatted PDF of all our client Clutch reviews on our Resources page: <http://www.zinzin.com/naming-guides-company-product-names/>.*

# Cassava

**PROJECT:** Name the premier substance abuse recovery app that helps users maintain their sobriety.



**CASSAVA:** A staple food in the tropics. Any of several plants of the genus *Manihot* having fleshy roots yielding a nutritious starch and the source of tapioca.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Elements Behavioral Health, a national network of substance abuse and mental health treatment centers and programs, hired us to name the next generation of their iPromises recovery app. The new iPhone / iPad app is offered free of charge on the new [Addiction.com](http://Addiction.com) portal for addiction, recovery and mental health that Elements created. The app is designed to provide users with a variety of simple tools they can use every day, such as easily locate nearby meetings, monitor moods and activities, and track daily progress, to help them build a strong foundation in — and stay on track with — their recovery.

During our brand development workshop with the client, we identified three key brand positions that formed the conceptual framework for the name development phase. Throughout the review process a cluster of names emerged that evoked recovery, sustainability and nurturing, but Cassava quickly rose to the top as the perfect metaphor for this innovative recovery app. Cassava is a nutritious staple food of the tropics, and the name evokes fresh ocean breezes, rejuvenation, health and well being. Cassava is a sweet and very *sticky* (memorable) name that is as fun to say as it is easy to use.

This app keeps users connected to the *nurturing roots* of recovery one day at a time. Cassava is a spirited, lively and action-oriented name that has the potential of becoming part of the parlance of recovery: *Let's Cassava a meeting together.*

The Cassava App: Get grounded in recovery.

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## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL:

"We're on our eighth [ten now completed] project with them. It's a very good process. It's very effective. It's fun and very collaborative. What stands out to me is the consistency in their work, their professionalism and how they deliver their work."

—Chief Internet and Media Officer, Elements Behavioral Health

# Alloy

**PROJECT:** Rename an existing personal training systems company to create a powerful brand that aspires to be *the* leader for fitness facilities worldwide.

**ALLOY:** A metallic substance made by mixing and fusing two or more metals, or a metal and a nonmetal, to obtain desirable qualities such as hardness, lightness, and strength. Brass, bronze, and steel are all alloys. More generally, a mixture, blend, or combination of two or more things to obtain desirable new qualities.



**BRAND POSITIONING:** North Point Personal Training Systems came to us with an interesting project. The company licenses personal training systems to individual gyms, studios and trainers all over the world. We were tasked with renaming this business in order to create a strong, resonant brand for a product that manages all aspects of fitness facilities and could, potentially, become the name of franchise facilities as well.

Alloy is the ideal name for this unique business. The name represents a combination of elements coming together to create something bigger, stronger, and longer-lasting, just like the Alloy system does when combined with an individual trainer's skill, passion and know-how. It's where strength and motion meet.

The name Alloy also reflects the relationship between the trainer and their clients, working together to make the clients fitter, stronger, and healthier. Alloy is transformational, a fusion of the best practices of physical fitness business and training, trainer and client, body and mind.

Alloy. Stronger together.exp.lore.com.

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## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL:

"They were really good. They are really subject matter experts in naming. It was a great customer experience. I was as satisfied as I could be."

—President, Alloy Personal Training Solutions

# Lore

**PROJECT:** Re-name the online education service company Coursekit to create a broader, higher-level, evocative brand that will become synonymous with *learning*.



**LORE:** Lore is knowledge acquired through education or experience, shared between people and passed down across generations. Literally the body of knowledge, especially of a traditional, anecdotal, or popular nature, on a particular subject; *folklore*. Learning, knowledge, or erudition that transcends book learning.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Coursekit began life in the fall of 2011 as an online course management service for college students and professors. Offering an experience far superior to all existing course management products, Coursekit was a big hit, and its growth and word-of-mouth buzz has been tremendous. But the company's mission is greater than just the nuts and bolts of course management; it is about the bigger idea of sharing and transmitting knowledge itself between people. The name Coursekit was too narrow, linear, and failed to rise above the goods and services being offered, which is a hallmark of powerful brands that command strong audience engagement

Joseph Cohen, the co-founder and CEO of Coursekit, hired Zinzin to create the perfect name for his Big Idea, and we delivered with Lore, a *transformational* name for a transformational company. Here's how Lore announced their new name to the world: "Coursekit started as a toolkit for courses. Courses became communities of learners. We've seen that people learn by sharing. Our mission is to connect the world's learners and educators. We need a name that reflects our ambitions. Lore means knowledge shared between people. That's what we are about."

Simple, direct, and to the point. The company also created an advanced blog to function as "a discovery engine for meaningful knowledge, fueled by cross-disciplinary curiosity," which is all about *exploring* knowledge. The added bonus of the name Lore, after having secured the exact-match .com domain name, is that this discovery engine, edited by Maria Popova of Brain Pickings fame, is called Explore, and can be found at the subdomain [exp.lore.com](http://exp.lore.com).

# Gogo

**PROJECT:** A revolutionary new wi-fi service for commercial aircraft.

**GOGO:** From "go-go" -- full of energy, vitality, or daring; stylish, modern, or up-to-date.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The name had to be memorable, fun, short, universally known, be available for trademark and easy to pronounce globally, and map to both the travel experience and the Internet connectivity experience.



# Aquaria

**PROJECT:** Name a new financial company that provides small business loans and capital financing to entrepreneurs.

**AQUARIA:** A beautiful word that is the plural of aquarium, which can either describe a small tank or an entire building housing fish and other aquatic life.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Aquaria maps to a primary brand positioning concept we developed for this project, which we called "The Source": metaphorically the source of life, and literally as a positive source of energy to help nourish your small business and, by extension, a source for new jobs in the community. Aquaria is fresh, natural, and refreshing, evoking a colorful, active, life-sustaining and nurturing organic ecosystem, just the kind of lending environment that the company has created for small businesses as an alternative to the cold, impersonal world of the big banks. Aquaria will help put your company on the map and on display for all the world to see and marvel at, so your business and your dream can flourish. An elegant and beautiful name that perfectly reflects the aspirations and brand narrative of this vibrant company.



# Redshift

**PROJECT:** Name a new MBA-level online training product for business from eCornell drawing from a library of on-demand content from Cornell University.

**REDSHIFT:** In astronomy, a shift in the spectra of very distant galaxies toward longer wavelengths (to the red end of the spectrum); generally interpreted as evidence that the universe is expanding.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** *Evidence that the universe is expanding*, Redshift is the perfect metaphor for a system that enables and empowers the next-generation of business leaders to create expansive, sustained growth for their companies. The color red is an essential element of the Cornell University and eCornell brand identity; in fact, "Big Red" is the informal name of the sports teams, and other competitive teams, at Cornell University. So the client very much liked the dynamic reference to Cornell University, in the sense of "shifting" away from the ivory tower of academia ("Big Red") to the "real world" of corporate learning, while still retaining its roots and academic *bona fides*. Expanding the *universe* of education beyond the *university*. "Shift" also suggests a new paradigm in online learning, as well as shifting the balance sheet "out of the red and into the black," implying that this is good for a company's bottom line. Authoritative, proven, credible and dynamic, a forward-thinking name for a progressive leader in online education.



## 3D XPoint

**PROJECT:** Name a breakthrough non-volatile storage memory technology.

**3D XPOINT:** Pronounced “3D cross point,” referring to the structure of the memory cells.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** We helped our client Intel create the name 3D XPoint for this breakthrough new storage memory technology. Intel 3D XPoint storage memory technology delivers faster performance and greater power efficiency at lower cost across a range of products from SSDs, to servers, 2 in 1 PCs and tablets. This ingredient brand technology makes other storage chips better by unlocking enormous memory capabilities and speed at low cost. Data is *persistent* (non-volatile), meaning that when you shut off the power, the data isn’t lost, as with RAM/Flash memory.

The name for this technology had to send the signal that the products incorporating it are a generational, revolutionary advancement of Intel innovation, while driving brand-building equity more to the “Intel” masterbrand than to the technology itself. 3D XPoint perfectly serves this purpose.



# Lucida

**PROJECT:** Create a name for a new, upscale, state-of-the-art residential mental health and substance abuse treatment center in South Florida that appeals equally to both English and Spanish-speakers.



**LUCIDA:** A play off *lucid*: having a clear mind, characterized by clear perception or understanding; rational or sane. Lucid comes from the Latin *lucidus*: clear, bright, shining, full of light, and thus, figuratively: clear, perspicuous, and lucid. But Lucida is also an English word in its own right, meaning "the brightest star in a constellation," closely related to another meaning of lucid: shining and bright, able to be seen with clarity. Lucida is easily understood in Spanish, for which *lucido* is the direct translation of lucid.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The goal of any mental health or substance treatment program is *lucidity*: having a clear mind, characterized by keen perception or understanding of one's self, and being rational or sane, often quite the opposite from how people are when they first enter into month-long residential treatment programs. The multiple meanings and associations of the name Lucida, evoking the clarity and rationality of *lucid thought*, as well as the transformational aspiration of burnishing your mind and spirit to become "the brightest star in a constellation," make is a perfect fit for this treatment facility, whose brand position and tagline is "Discover Your Light." Lucida will illuminate your path to lasting recovery, and, the light, spirit and elegance of Lucida clearly transcends culture and language.

Lucida: Discover Your Light.

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## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL:

"We're on our eighth [ten now completed] project with them. It's a very good process. It's very effective. It's fun and very collaborative. What stands out to me is the consistency in their work, their professionalism and how they deliver their work."

—Chief Internet and Media Officer, Elements Behavioral Health

# AeroBurner

**PROJECT:** Naming a top of the line golf club product family brand for TaylorMade Golf.

**AEROBURNER:** The faster, more aerodynamic replacement for TaylorMade's category-leading Burner series of drivers, extended to a full family brand that includes irons and golf balls in addition to drivers.



**BRAND POSITIONING:** The name AeroBurner came out of exploring a variety of concepts to replace the Burner series of drivers, which included names such as *AfterBurner*. AeroBurner more uniquely expresses the concept of aerodynamics and speed that this club exemplifies. Very sleek, high-tech and future-forward.



# Fluent

**PROJECT:** Rebrand one of North America's largest home security firms to consolidate two companies into one, with a new name and a broader mission: comprehensive home automation.



**FLUENT:** The ability to express oneself readily, clearly and effectively. Flowing or moving smoothly and gracefully. To be fluent in something — like a language or an instrument — is to be able to use it smoothly and effortlessly. If you're performing a skill, task or deed in a way that makes it look easy, you're fluent.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The client came to us with a unique problem: because of trademark issues, the same home security company known as Titan Alarm in Canada was called Stryke Alarm in the United States, creating a split personality, not to mention duplicate accounting and business processes. As the company was also moving beyond just home security into a full spectrum of comprehensive, state-of-the-art home automation and security, this was the perfect time to rebrand and finally align all their businesses in North America, collectively serving over 500,000 customers, under one powerful new brand name.

The name Fluent perfectly repositions the company as the definitive experts who "speak all languages" in user-friendly home automation and security. The Fluent home automation and security system is always on: it's ready, steady, and good to go. A Fluent home is whip smart, energy efficient, safe, secure and very easy to manage. The Fluent home automation system is fluid, responsive, versatile, and elegantly designed. It is the embodiment of grace under pressure, performing seamlessly, effortlessly, day in and day out. Fluent is the premiere technology and service resource for all your security, home and automation needs.

# Gravy

**PROJECT:** Re-name an event listings mobile app to create an evocative brand synonymous with finding great things to do near you.

**GRAVY:** Gravy is the good stuff, the "secret sauce," a source for discovering all the juicy things going on around you.



**BRAND POSITIONING:** The brand positioning for this app began with "Get Engaged" – have an active lifestyle, be out and about, take part in life by discovering great events and experiences right in your own backyard. Finding and having fun, memorable experiences shouldn't be hard, shouldn't be a time-consuming chore, shouldn't be work; it should be natural and easy. Like Gravy. The brand embodies — and the new name demonstrates — a rich and flavorful experience; it brings out the best and makes everything taste better. Gravy shows you the way, but doesn't get in the way. It's your very own *hipster tipster!*

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## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL:

"In terms of market impact, [the new name] changed everything for our company. It's the most tangible aspect of our brand, we've trademarked it, and it has become everything that we represent to the marketplace. Among other things, people ask us all the time what the name means, so it gets the response we want, which is, increased engagement with our customers."

—Founder of Gravy

# Jupiter Wells

**PROJECT:** A new upscale online window treatments brand.

**JUPITER WELLS:** Derived from a very small and remote Australian Aboriginal settlement called Jupiter Well.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Evocative, memorable and differentiated from the crowd of boring, mostly descriptive names in the window treatment space. This name elevates the brand above the goods being sold; is charming and disarming; emphasizes style; has some familiarity/meaning; and sounds vaguely like it could be both a designer's name and/or evoke a non-specific sense of place. Jupiter Wells demonstrates, rather than explains, a unique, entirely new perspective, creating emotional engagement with its audience.

JUPITER WELLS

# Wavelength

**PROJECT:** Name a unified communication software platform for the financial market trading industry.

**WAVELENGTH:** The distance between two points in the same phase in consecutive cycles of a wave. A shared orientation leading to mutual understanding (“They are on the same wavelength”).

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Cloud9 is a pioneering trader communication technology company that has reinvented the way traders interact with each other and office staff, transforming communication both on and off of the trading floor with modern, cloud-based communication technology. They came to us to name a new unified communication software platform that seamlessly connects front, middle, and back office operations with intercom capabilities and facilitates real-time exchanges of information across the entire trading lifecycle.

The name we developed, Wavelength, maps both to the physical carrier of voice communications to the ear — sound waves — but also to the act of the communicating parties being in-sync with one another by *getting on the same Wavelength*.



# Tizzy

**PROJECT:** Create a brand name for a new "yogurt café" restaurant chain.

**TIZZY:** A state of nervous excitement.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Several soon-to-be-ex-Golden Spoon Frozen Yogurt franchise owners who were passionate about expanding the "single category" frozen yogurt menu to multiple complementary products that meet the needs of active and healthy-lifestyle customers hired Zinzin to put a name to their vision. Tizzy captures the feeling of great excitement and elation when you enter one of the shops and discover that this is not your typical frozen yogurt experience. This brand is all about energy, vitality and joy. Tizzy offers a healthy and nutritional menu and has something for everyone: parents, kids, seniors, college students — even elite athletes. The stores have a warm and comfortable environment, with free wi-fi, where customers can meet friends and family, hang out, conduct business meetings, and get a pre- or post-workout energy boost.

There are also many ways that the brand and its customers can play with the language around this name: *Get into a Tizzy. I'm in a Tizzy. Meet me at Tizzy's. I'm in a Tizzy for great frozen yogurt.* A short, sweet, powerful and memorable name.



# Nuage Rouge

**PROJECT:** Rebrand a Montreal-based artisanal gourmet food service for cafes, bars, and microbreweries. French is the dominant language in Quebec, and by law all commercial signage in Montreal must appear in French. So the new name had to work first in French, but also translate well into English.

**NUAGE ROUGE:** The English translation is "Red Cloud." A *nuage rouge / red cloud sunset* occurs when unique atmospheric conditions turn the sun and the surrounding sky an intense red. Red Cloud is also the name of a powerful Native American warrior and chief of the Oglala Lakota from 1868 to 1909.



**BRAND POSITIONING:** We worked closely with the client to create a powerful and memorable brand and insure that the name worked equally well in both English and French. There are myriad poetic images evoked by Nuage Rouge. For instance, "Nuage/Cloud" connotes limitless possibilities, light, air, freshness, bliss, euphoria, energy, the spirit world, mobility, freedom, liberty, abandon, independence and boundless imagination. "Rouge/Red" evokes feelings of hot, spicy, peppery, sexy, passionate, bold, daring, audacious, dangerous, extreme, and revolutionary.

Nuage Rouge is the perfect metaphor for an eclectic fusion of French, Cajun, Belgian, Spanish and South American cuisine. The vision for the kitchen was inspired by the ethos and food preparation techniques of a community of Trappist monks which settled in Quebec in the early 20th century. The Trappists deeply believe in the power of work and the creation of goods. The 48th chapter of the Rule of St. Benedict states, "for then are they monks in truth, if they live by the work of their hands." Nuage Rouge shares this deep commitment to the land, food, and the spiritual powers of honest craft.

But the brand also has a more playful and wild side that is invoked by its philosophical associations with the Trickster archetype. The Trickster in Native American mythology is a spirit or anthropomorphic animal who plays tricks or otherwise disobeys normal rules and conventional behavior in order to raise awareness, and acts as an equalizer and catalyst for change. Tricksters can be cunning or foolish or both; they are often funny even when considered sacred or while performing important cultural tasks. The mission of Nuage Rouge is to disturb the conventional bar food paradigm with its rustic and sustainable approach to food preparation, delivery, consumption and package recycling. Another unique and disruptive aspect to Nuage Rouge is that their products can pop up anywhere, anytime and in any form just like a mischievous Trickster. Or a *cloud*. In fact, you might think of them as the first *cloud-based* kitchen in Canada. Perhaps the entire world.

# Braven

**PROJECT:** Name a new addiction treatment program for young adults who are at high risk of relapse. The program provides a personalized 12-step approach, individual therapy sessions, gender-specific group therapy, recreational therapy, life-skills training and access to state-of-the-art psychiatric medical services.



**BRAVEN:** A rare English word meaning to make brave, embolden. Or, to paraphrase the Urban Dictionary definition: A strong, courageous, warrior; a leader of many in fairness and truth; a man or woman with a purpose.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Elements Behavioral Health, a repeat client of ours, came to us to rebrand what had been called "The Impact Program" for high-risk young adults at The Recovery Place, an Elements treatment center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Traditional alcohol and drug rehab programs tend to treat everyone the same way. This approach isn't very effective, especially with relapse-prone young adults who have unique issues and triggers.

Elements was interested in a name that *demonstrated* rather than *described* their unique approach to recovery. We responded by developing the distinctive and empowering name Braven, saluting the boldness and bravery required of these young adults to overcome powerful negative forces in their lives, with a nod to contemporary usage that elevates their struggle to the heroic and emphasizes positive traits of integrity, strength and honesty. Recovery is a program of action, and Braven is a very actionable and "verbable" name. The Recovery Place *Bravens* its young clients, empowering them with the courage, strength and hope to thrive in the adult world.

*Braven: Fearless in the face of addiction.*

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## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL:

"We're on our eighth [ten now completed] project with them. It's a very good process. It's very effective. It's fun and very collaborative. What stands out to me is the consistency in their work, their professionalism and how they deliver their work."

—Chief Internet and Media Officer, Elements Behavioral Health

# Criterion

**PROJECT:** Rename an established HCM (Human Capital Management) software company to create a brand that better represents the values and aspirations of this reenergized HR, benefits and payroll software firm.



**CRITERION:** The ideal in terms of which something can be judged; a basis for comparison; a reference point against which other things can be evaluated.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** PerfectSoftware came to us as a thirty year old software firm with a new management team, game-changing product enhancements, and fresh capital investment that positioned the company for explosive growth. The management team saw this as the perfect opportunity to rebrand and asked us to create a name that better exemplified the company's bold new vision and ethos.

We created the name Criterion, which is the perfect brand name for both the company that is setting the new standard in HR software performance and the software platform that delivers on every important *criteria* of Human Capital Management (HCM). Criterion provides HR professionals with a comprehensive, integrated and flexible human resource and payroll solution for managing their company's most valuable asset — human capital. Which is another way of saying People Power.

The name also maps to the unique approach the company takes in product development, which is to design and implement each system based on their client's individual *criteria* of system features and functionality. In essence, each system is a not only setting a new standard of excellence in software engineering, but also the *criterion* by which they are developed. In addition, Criterion's HCM suite allows businesses and organizations to manage a broad range of critical human resource functions more effectively and efficiently, within a single system.

# Sliver

**PROJECT:** Name a "super premium" vodka from Australia.

**SLIVER:** A small, slender, often sharp piece, as of wood or glass, split, broken, or cut off, usually lengthwise or with the grain; splinter. Any small, narrow piece or portion.

# SLIVER

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Sliver is the perfect name for this "Ferrari of Vodkas" — sexy, daring, and exciting. It exudes an edgy aura that maps to the unique, sophisticated bottles, flavors and colors of this "super premium" vodka made from 100% Australian grain and volcanic spring water.



# Fresh Gravity

**PROJECT:** Name a new digital customer experience company that offers a full suite of services for on-premise and cloud-based sales, marketing, and service programs.



**FRESH GRAVITY:** *Fresh:* Original and of a kind not seen before, imparting vitality and energy, recently made, produced, or harvested; new or energetic; modern and different. *Gravity:* The noun gravity means very serious (*gravitas*) — someone who conducts themselves with an air of gravity is someone who takes what they are doing seriously; in physics, gravity is the natural force that makes any two objects that have mass move toward each other.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** We created the name Fresh Gravity for this IT consulting startup with an exciting new approach to the digital customer experience, committed to championing, promoting, and advancing their clients' endeavors. The name is challenging, playful, and disruptive: we make gravitas, and gravity itself, *fresh*. Fresh Gravity is an organic, sustainable, and refreshing alternative to the customer experience status quo.

# Exeter

**PROJECT:** Name a new enterprise healthcare payer software platform from DST Health Solutions.

**EXETER**

**EXETER:** Derived from the historic city Exeter in Devon, England. Originally the ancient Roman city of *Isca Dumnoniorum* ("Isca of the Dumnonos or Devonians"), it was important because of its strategic location. A few hundred years after the Romans left, the river's name morphed from the Celtic word *Isca* (water) into *Exe*, and the strategic city on its banks became known as Exeter. The city's motto is *Semper fidelis* (Always Faithful). Indicative of its associations with power and speed, five different ships of the British Royal Navy and one Star Trek starship have been named Exeter.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The strategic business demands of today's healthcare industry call for internal payer software that is adaptable, secure and fast. The name Exeter is short, poetic and energetic. It has an epic, historical feel, but also a nice high-tech connotation, without sounding trendy or appearing faddish. With its "-eter" suffix, it implies exactitude as well as measurement — think units of measure (meter, kilometer, centimeter) or measuring devices (barometer, altimeter, speedometer). The name Exeter evokes this software platform's precision, speed, and reliability. Exeter is the new standard in healthcare payer management software.

# Relativity

**PROJECT:** Rebrand the Substance Abuse and Intimacy Disorders (SAID) program for Elements Behavioral Health. This program for alcohol and drug treatment has a dual emphasis on healing relationship and intimacy issues.



**RELATIVITY:** The quality or state of being relative.

A state of dependence in which the existence or significance of one entity is solely dependent on that of another. A theory, formulated essentially by Albert Einstein, that all motion must be defined relative to a frame of reference and that space and time are relative, rather than absolute concepts.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Elements Behavioral Health came to us to develop a new name for their Substance Abuse and Intimacy Disorders program. The treatment program was developed by a team of distinguished clinicians and follows the best practices of evidence-based substance abuse treatment. Clients dealing with substance abuse issues can find it particularly difficult to maintain healthy relationships with their family, friends and life partners. Research has shown that 90% of people with chemical dependency have underlying relationship and intimacy problems.

After a thorough and very collaborative brand development process, we arrived at Relativity, the perfect name for this collective experience designed to provide clients with new ways to see, cope, and participate in their relationships. Relativity emphasizes that for all of us, our own wellbeing is "relative" to the health and wellbeing of those we have relationships with, and that the stability of those relationships can greatly affect our stability. It also maps strongly to that other all-important meaning of "relative," the families of substance abusers who often have a large role to play in both the onset and the recovery from addictive behavior.

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## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL:

"We're on our eighth [ten now completed] project with them. It's a very good process. It's very effective. It's fun and very collaborative. What stands out to me is the consistency in their work, their professionalism and how they deliver their work."

—Chief Internet and Media Officer, Elements Behavioral Health

# Audience

**PROJECT:** Rename DirecTV's 101® Network of original programming.

**AUDIENCE:** The Audience is the essential element of all entertainment.



**BRAND POSITIONING:** This project was an opportunity to create a television brand that was different, with a name that was about the audience rather than about the product or the network. Amazingly, though the word "audience" appears in virtually every movie review and every article about a television network, it had never been used as a name in the television / film production industry or in the entertainment business. It had been hiding in plain sight, overlooked.

# Exo

**PROJECT:** Name Shaw's next generation telecommunications network, offering high-definition television, on-demand programming, high-speed Internet and advanced telephone capabilities.



**EXO:** Derived from the prefix "exo-," meaning "outside of" (exoskeleton, exosystem). Shaw Exo is short, sweet, cool, futuristic, and works great as a graphic "bug" on TV, computer and mobile device screens.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Shaw Communications, the leading cable television and Internet provider in Canada, wanted a name for its next generation television and communications network that was short, powerful, and different from the competition. Exo deftly delivers, positioning the product as beyond the usual, beyond expectations, beyond what has been done before in this space, and "outside the box," both figuratively and literally (the TV cable box). The name is aspirational and future-forward.

# Firefly

**PROJECT:** Renaming a legal services company specializing in process serving. The old name, Amicus, is too generic and cloaked in legalese.

**FIREFLY:** Let there be light. Illumination. Warmth.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The name Firefly evokes the company's vanguard corporate culture filled with bright people and bright ideas, and differentiates the company from all other legal firms that almost universally have either cold, legalistic names or sound-alike strings of multiple partner surnames. The name supports the brand positioning of openness – illuminating and demystifying an area of the legal profession that many people do not understand. It is warm, friendly, and illuminating, and broad enough to work with any direction the company might take it in the future.



# Antidote

**PROJECT:** Create a new company name for Medical World Conferences, providers of continuing medical education (CME) for primary care professionals.

**ANTIDOTE:** A cure for the common name.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The new name had to be warm, human, distinctive, eye-catching, memorable, and yet map back to medicine and the core service of continuing medical education. It also needed to work outside of the medical sector. Antidote is positive, proactive, unique and remarkable in the world of CME providers, and works on several levels for both the CME audience and future audiences. Antidote is also the remedy for medical professionals who dread the thought of compulsory CME. Further, because Antidote literally conveys "cure" and "remedy," it is an aspiration shared by all medical professionals – indeed a big benefit of CME is to learn about new cures and treatments.



# Twine

**PROJECT:** Name a new personal and group information manager web application.

**TWINE:** Twine ties all your information together.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Web 3.0, AKA the "semantic web," promises the next generation of web intelligence and advanced data mining, connectivity, and meaning. The mission of gathering all this information and "tying it all together" led to Twine, the perfect name for this new kind of information manager. An elegant word for a deceptively simple physical object, Twine is also a verb meaning, "to twist together; intertwine; interweave." Twine it, Twine me, Twining all my information together.



# Firebrand

**PROJECT:** New company name for The Training Camp, a UK and Germany-based IT training company that decided to go out on its own and become independent of the American company that shared the same name.

**FIREBRAND:** A concept, idea or person that challenges outmoded beliefs and methods.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Going independent required a new name, and the company wanted a powerful name that captured its spirit as philosophical and tactical disruptors within the IT training industry, pioneers of an intense, immersive, accelerated approach to IT learning that is far ahead of its competitors in the European market. The new name had to work specifically in the UK and Germany, as well as across the whole of the European IT community that the company serves. Firebrand perfectly suits the company's philosophy and the way it delivers industry-leading training.



# Javelin

**PROJECT:** Name a new evidence-based, one-year addiction recovery continuing care program for Elements Behavioral Health that will span their entire nationwide network of treatment centers.

JAVELIN

**JAVELIN:** A light spear thrown in a competitive sport, culminating in the Olympic Games, in which success is measured in distance thrown.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** During our brand positioning workshop with the client, we learned that most recovery programs treat addiction as an episodic, acute illness, and that this new program addresses substance abuse as chronic disease. The program provides clients and their families the framework to work closely with their coach to minimize triggers, set and monitor goals through regular drug screens and a system of rewards and accountability, and establish a healthy social support network, all of which have proven effective in promoting long-term recovery.

After developing a number of names that mapped to the brand positioning, Javelin quickly rose to the top as the perfect metaphor for this dynamic, powerful, and sustainable recovery program. It has been said that recovery is a program of action, and the Javelin throw is certainly a vivid demonstration of stamina, grace and power. The Javelin was a component of the original Olympic pentathlon; pentathletes were considered to be among the most skilled athletes, and were held in high esteem as physical specimens, "capable of enduring all efforts," according to Aristotle, which maps conceptually to the skills necessary to maintain an enduring recovery.

"We believe the name 'Javelin' reflects the strengths of the program," says Janet Tewhill, Senior Vice President of Continuing Care at Elements Behavioral Health. "The javelin is known as a graceful, long-distance weapon and tool. At Elements' family of treatment centers, the Javelin program will be a powerful weapon against relapse as well as an elegant tool in promoting long-term recovery."

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—Chief Internet and Media Officer, Elements Behavioral Health

# Quandary

**PROJECT:** Create a name for a content marketing agency that solves the paradox of companies that have become too busy to create the valuable content that made them busy in the first place.



**QUANDARY:** The "negative" dictionary definition of the word quandary — "uncertainty over a decision"

and "a good word to use when faced with a dilemma that has no easy solution" — adds creative friction, which greatly increases the value of this name as a brand.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Ed Ravis is a brilliant internet content consultant and thinker who grew his marketing consultancy into a mini-empire in the UK with book and DVD sales, sold-out lectures, a top-ranked website and many clients who lined-up to hire him to create valuable web content for their companies. Soon, Ed was very successful, and very busy, too busy developing content for other companies to continue creating the the valuable blog and Internet Marketing content that was one of his main sources of new clients. So as he became more successful, the very thing that brought him success, his authentic, valuable content, began to wither.

In short, Ed was in a quandary. His eureka moment was to realize that many other businesses were probably also in this same quandary, which presented a fantastic new business opportunity. So Ed created a marketing content creation company to solve this paradox for himself and his clients. All he needed now was a name that could live up to his vision.

The name Quandary has a built-in narrative that supports the unique selling proposition of Ed's agency. It tells a great story, and everyone who hears it is immediately intrigued and wants to know more, one of the most important functions of a brand name.

Of all the names we developed and presented to Ed for this project, Quandary was the most difficult for a typical naming committee to adopt as a brand, because most such committees would assume that the "negative" meaning of the word would be taken literally by clients. Fortunately, Ed was smart enough to realize that once a name has been put into a brand *context*, people don't take "negative" definitions literally, and with minimal effort will make the leap of understanding that Quandary is all about *solving* quandaries, not creating them. Only a company that is supremely confident that it can solve "dilemmas with no easy solutions" could pull off a bodacious name like Quandary. And isn't that the kind of the company you'd want to hire?

## Aria

**PROJECT:** The luxury hotel centerpiece of the new Las Vegas CityCenter development.

**ARIA:** From opera, an elaborate song for solo voice.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The name Aria perfectly captures the experience of art and elegance that this hotel represents, and maps to the concept of a performance by a star that is nonetheless part of an ensemble. Aria is deftly positioned as the antithesis of the stereotype Las Vegas experience. Think cool and classy, not cheap and trashy, with none of the "theme park" pretense so prevalent in most Las Vegas hotels.

The word "Aria" is written in a fluid, handwritten-style script font. The letters are connected, with a prominent arch over the 'A' and a small trademark symbol (TM) at the end.

## truTV

**PROJECT:** New name for Court TV.

**truTV:** Television *vérité*.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The new name reflects the network's popular line-up of series that offer first-person access to exciting, real-life stories, and is no longer restricted to court-themed shows.

The word "tru" is in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. To its right, the letters "TV" are enclosed in a dark blue circle.

## Arte

**PROJECT:** New name for Nokia's top-of-the-line 8800 mobile phone.

**ARTE:** State of the art, a work of art.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The new Arte and Sapphire Arte, mobile phones that are truly works of art, among the most beautiful consumer objects available.

The word "NOKIA" is in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font. Below it, the word "Arte" is written in a larger, bold, lowercase, sans-serif font.

# Primordial

**PROJECT:** A defense contractor that developed vision systems for soldiers, police officers and firefighters, needed a new company name to reflect broader product offerings.



**PRIMORDIAL:** The earliest, original and most elemental state.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The company provides simple interfaces to complex technology with a minimalist design. This results in ultra high-tech systems that work with the operator in an intuitive, organic and primal way. Primordial was the best word to capture all of those ideas in an interesting, never-been-done way, provide the company with clear separation from their competitors in the defense industry, and be a strong competitor in the consumer market. Primordial is also a great counterweight to "hi-tech," the distance between the two being as big as it gets, making the pairing of concepts compelling and engaging.

# July

**PROJECT:** Texas Pension Consultants, a financial services company, was ready to re-brand and re-name.



**JULY:** Financial freedom and independence (4th of July); joy of summer.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The company provides business services such as payroll, pension and human resource management to businesses of all sizes. One of the key positioning points the name had to capture is "the freedom to focus on your core business." The name also needed to be fresh and different, yet fall within the parameters of the types of names associated with the financial services sector. Financial companies are most often identified by names that conjure nature, stability, or longevity. July is a name that covers all the established financial services cues, is fresh and different, and infers — rather than shouts — "Freedom," making it very engaging.

# Larky

**PROJECT:** Name a startup company and mobile app that keeps track of all your perks and reward program memberships in one place. The name had to be free of any app competition in the iOS and Android app stores and have an exact-match .com domain name available for purchase at a sub-exorbitant rate.



**LARKY:** Larky is a quirky play off "lark," a carefree or spirited adventure, harmless prank, or family of birds who communicate with sustained, melodious songs. The "-ark" of Larky is very similar to the "-erk" of perk, so Larky naturally alludes to "perk," but in an associative, non-literal way.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Larky is fun, playful, joyous, melodiously singsong, and also conjures up a "lucky" feeling. In other words, it is the perfect name for an app that is ever-vigilant about alerting you to special deals sure to surprise and delight you with all the perks and discounts you deserve from your memberships. If you belong to AAA, AARP, USAA, an alumni association, professional association, museum, or any one of thousands of member organizations covered by Larky, you're entitled to valuable discounts on stuff you buy every day. It's fun, free, and really easy — no membership numbers, no account passwords, no cost, no pain.

Get Larky and get what you deserve.

# Streamline

**PROJECT:** Name a selective brush control herbicide product.

**STREAMLINE:** Ease, precision, reliability.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The name Streamline underscores the precision with which this product attacks only invasive brush, not native plants.

The logo features the word "DUPONT" in red, uppercase, sans-serif font, enclosed within a red oval. Below this, the word "Streamline" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by a trademark symbol (TM).

# Pulsar

**PROJECT:** New solid state drive (SSD) product and product family name.

**PULSAR:** A evocative astronomical term meaning "one of several hundred known celestial objects, generally believed to be rapidly rotating neutron stars, that emit pulses of radiation, esp. radio waves, with a high degree of regularity."

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Seagate needed a name for a new product family that captured its futuristic essence and conveyed key concepts of speed, small footprint, power, capacity, durability and reliability. Pulsar is the perfect metaphorical name for this product family.



# Monkeybar

**PROJECT:** Name for a web destination serving up online games, programs and activities for boys and girls of various ages.

**MONKEYBAR:** A fun place for kids to play and "monkey around."

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Monkeybar is a delightful name that says, "here is a place for kids to come and play and have fun."



# TheWit

**PROJECT:** Name a new upscale urban business hotel in downtown Chicago.

**TheWit:** Keen perception, sagacity, intelligence and humor.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** "TheWit" captures the essence of a remarkable hotel experience infused with intelligence, creativity and *joie de vivre*, in a business hotel that refuses to take itself too seriously.



# Veneer

**PROJECT:** Name for a full-service web and interactive design agency.

**VENEER:** Emphasizing the depth beyond the "skin deep" beauty by referencing the surface in the name.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Anybody can make a pretty website, but Veneer goes deeper, focusing first on the visual and interactive foundation of a brand, then mastering all the geeky details that make their beautifully designed websites actually work. What better way to create a conversation between front-end design and back-end power, between surface and depth, between form and function, than with the name Veneer? Because great design is more than just a pretty picture, and the beautiful surface is only as strong as the underlying structure that supports it. Plus, Veneer is a cool, mysterious, playful name whose value no designers outside the simulated wood grain industry seemed to recognize.



# Landslide

**PROJECT:** Name a new sales/CRM software platform. So successful was the chosen name it ultimately became the new company name too.

**LANDSLIDE:** Overwhelming success (a landslide victory); great energy; a force of nature; powerful and unstoppable.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Maps to software and service that prepares you for a shifting sales landscape, setting you up for overwhelming success, a Landslide victory over your sales quota. The name has great depth and multiple meanings; the negative meaning adds friction, which helps make the name even more engaging and memorable.



# Zounds

**PROJECT:** Name a new advanced-technology hearing aid and audio products company.

**ZOUNDS:** An interjection that's an expression of wonder, and a play on "sounds."

**BRAND POSITIONING:** An early appearance of Zounds in Shakespeare's King John (1623), act II, scene 1, line 466: "Zounds! I was never so bethumpd with words since I first call'd my brothers father dad!" That certainly maps to an advanced hearing aid product that allows the hearer to process words in a crowded room in a way they were never able to before. Zounds is an exciting name that is by definition an "expression of wonder," that when combined with the obvious play on "sounds" and the oblique allusion to German hi-tech engineering, makes it the perfect name for this company.



# Showcase

**PROJECT:** Name a new set-top box optimized for recording high-definition movies and TV programs.

**SHOWCASE:** A Showcase for content.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The name Showcase elegantly maps both to the experience of "showcasing" selected content by recording and archiving, as well as the functional attributes of being a "case" for holding "shows."

The logo for Seagate Showcase. The word "Seagate" is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below it, the word "Showcase" is in a blue, sans-serif font with a trademark symbol (TM) at the end.

# Zeno

**PROJECT:** Naming a revolutionary new advertising display media.

**ZENO:** Zeno of Elea was the famous Ancient Greek philosopher (circa 495-430 BC) who formulated paradoxes that defended the belief that motion and change are illusory.

The logo for ZENO. The word "ZENO" is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "E" is replaced by three horizontal blue lines.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** This startup company required a name with global trademark availability, reach and pronounce-ability. They created a unique new advertising display medium that delivers moving ads to moving people. Still frames from short video clips move optically with the viewer, following and responding individually to each and every viewer, without the use of any electronics or moving parts. The perceived "motion" is illusory. A paradox. A Zeno box. Zeno is the perfect name for an enigmatic paradox of vision, a uniquely personal interactive experience coming soon to a public space near you.

# Evolve

**PROJECT:** Name for a new eco-friendly mobile phone.

**EVOLVE:** Move boldly into the future; transformational; a call to action.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Nokia wanted a name that would describe the environmental benefit of this particular model, but also serve as a rallying cry for environmental awareness both within the company and among consumers.



# Freestyle

**PROJECT:** Create a new sub-brand for EA Sports aimed at a growing, more casual sports gaming audience.

**FREESTYLE:** The freedom to express yourself in your own unique way.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The new brand features games that, while based in sports, are playful, inclusive, casual, and easy to pick up and play for kids and parents, women and men, and casual and hardcore sports fans of all ages. Jump in, have fun, anybody can play, express yourself, and bend all the usual rules. That's what it's all about. Freestyle takes sports gaming to a whole new level, for a vast new audience.



# Oasis

**PROJECT:** Naming a breakthrough new "open MR" product. Open MR devices are not fully enclosed, and therefore are more comfortable for patients (less noise and confinement); open MR devices also have a greater imaging range than traditional, "closed" systems.



**OASIS:** Emphasizing comfort, a refuge from the tumult of the usual MRI experience.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The positioning goal was to highlight the idea that this device, rather than being a source of patient discomfort and physician frustration with scanning limitations, is instead a refuge from such drawbacks of the past, a haven where the physician can more accurately diagnose a patient's medical problem without causing the patient to suffer more discomfort in the process.

# Mojo

**PROJECT:** Create a new name for a high-definition television channel to feature original programming for men.

**MOJO:** Personal magnetism, life force and magical power. It came to the English language from Africa over one hundred years ago, but reached the status of pop culture phenomenon as the source of Austin Powers' manly powers.



**BRAND POSITIONING:** One consideration was keeping the name short so it could work easily as a "bug," the logo that TV networks place in the corner of the television screen, yet be differentiated from the plethora of be-acronymed WETVs, METVs MTVs and BETs that saturate the TV Guide. And having the name of this man-channel start with the letter "M" would be a nice bonus. Mojo is the perfect name for this channel. Get your MOJO working!

# Heartstring

**PROJECT:** Guidant's cardiac surgery division (now owned by Maquet) needed to name their breakthrough new proximal seal cardiac surgery device.

The logo for Heartstring, featuring the word "Heartstring" in a blue, sans-serif font with a trademark symbol (TM) to the upper right.

**HEARTSTRING:** Tug at your heartstrings.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The name needed to be as elemental as the new product, and help the company dominate the market. The assignment was to come up with a name that would achieve common, default usage. The Heartstring device is a coiled string that is used in place of a clamp when making a graft to the aorta during "off-pump" (beating-heart) open heart surgery. Besides being descriptive, Heartstring has a secondary emotional meaning ("tug at heartstrings"), and when the procedure is complete the surgeon literally "tugs on the Heartstring" to uncoil and remove it from the aorta.

# Luna

**PROJECT:** Create an evocative name for the Nokia 8600 mobile phone.

**LUNA:** Roman goddess of moonlight who was often represented as a mysteriously captivating beauty encircled in a soft, yet radiant light.

The logo for Nokia Luna, featuring the word "NOKIA" in a bold, black, sans-serif font above the word "Luna" in a bold, purple, sans-serif font.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Luna is the perfect name for this phone, with its radiant lighting effects and mysterious, otherworldly beauty.

# Rivet

**PROJECT:** Rename Aucent Corporation, a software startup.

**RIVET:** Strength, reliability, dependability. Old-fashioned stability in an often fluctuating high-tech environment.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Aucent's core business is XBRL business reporting and financial data analysis. XBRL (eXtensible Business Reporting Language) is the new standard to prepare and analyze financial information. The company's new name, Rivet, grounds it in the real, physical world, through the construction metaphor, tying things together, and building immense structures (or data reports) one "rivet of data" at a time. This name is Riveting.



# Crossfire

**PROJECT:** Name a new integrated XBRL software product for the company we named Rivet.

**CROSSFIRE:** Lots of activity coming from multiple directions.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Crossfire is a powerful name that maps to the enterprise cross-functionality of this breakthrough integrated XBRL product. When corporations fire up Crossfire, they can be assured of the highest quality financial reporting every time, in full compliance with the SEC, in a user-friendly package that makes it all much easier. All of the financial activity of a large enterprise reported from points across the globe can be translated into the XBRL (eXtensible Business Reporting Language) language using Crossfire.



# The Address

**PROJECT:** Name for a new 5-star hotel and global luxury lifestyle brand, with hotels to be located throughout the Middle East and in key feeder markets in Europe and Asia.

**THE ADDRESS:** As in the only Address you need to know.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The name, like the new hotels themselves, had to cater to intra-regional leisure travelers throughout the Middle East, as well as business travelers and long-haul international travelers to the region, primarily from Europe, Asia and India. The Address captures the sense of spectacular location advantage, the feeling that "this is where it's happening, this is the place to be."



# Groov

**PROJECT:** Naming a breakthrough new caulk product for GE/Momentive.

**GROOV:** Groovin,' get in the groove, get your groove on.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Momentive Performance materials, the spin-off of General Electric's advanced materials business and still partly owned by GE, needed a name for GE's breakthrough new caulk product. What makes this product revolutionary is an entirely new chemical technology that combines the long-lasting durability of silicone with the drying speed and ease of use of acrylic. Clean and easy to apply, this amazing caulk stays in the groove you lay it down in, hence the name Groov, a name with many layers of literal and metaphorical meaning, as the perfect name for this product.



## Mosaic

**PROJECT:** New name for Fontana Lithograph, one of the most respected and innovative printing shops in the Washington D.C. area.

**MOSAIC:** Putting all the pieces together, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** For a variety of reasons, Fontana Lithograph knew that it was time to rebrand the company. The company wanted to define an entirely new business segment, Corporate Print Collateral Consulting, while retaining their core identity as printers. Their new consulting business is all about managing the printed collateral that a large enterprise produces to establish their image. Mosaic conveys the idea of arranging many visual pieces into the most effective presentation possible, creating an artistic whole that is greater than the sum of its constituent parts.



## Pipeline HD

**PROJECT:** Name a new internal hard drive optimized for recording high-definition movies and TV programs.

**PIPELINE HD:** "Fat pipe," surf's up!

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The name Pipeline HD conveys the "fat pipe" of high bandwidth and massive storage required by high-definition content, as well as evoking the legendary Banzai Pipeline a metaphor for "channel surfing." Adding the descriptive appendage "HD" conforms to company functional requirements to clearly differentiate this as a specifically high-definition product, which also conveys that it is designed and optimized for home DVR and media center use.



# Origin

**PROJECT:** Name for the the operating software controlling Hitachi Medical's next generation magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machines.

**ORIGIN:** The beginning of an accurate diagnosis.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Hitachi has a great reputation for reliability and customer support, and they were looking for an easy to remember name that positioned the product to stress their excellent image quality, speed and performance, along with efficient, easy operation, reliability and strong ROI. Origin speaks to its primacy as the beginning of the MRI process, of being integral to the analysis of the MR images, and the "origin" of the diagnosis that leads to healing the patient.

The logo for 'ORIGIN' is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is located at the top right of the word.

# Whoop

**PROJECT:** Re-name XOsphere, a mobile phone software company.

**WHOOOP:** A joyful expression.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The company had created a powerful new mobile content platform that was truly phone- and carrier-agnostic, and they wanted an exciting, exuberant name that would match their vision and serve as a lightning rod for companies and the public to adopt this content platform. The name had to be a short verb, as well as exciting, inspiring, fun to say, memorable and extensible. The name Whoop accomplishes all this and more, allowing the company to redefine the conversation in the mobile content space.

The logo for 'Whoop' features the word 'Whoop' in a large, red, sans-serif font. Below it, the tagline 'everything mobile' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

# Tandem

**PROJECT:** Name a new, web-based media company marketing network portal.

**TANDEM:** Working together.



**BRAND POSITIONING:** The new, web-based media marketing network portal serves as a central hub for the purchasing and distribution of advertising and classifieds across multiple newspaper and media properties in Northern Ohio. The client wanted a name for it that would emphasize the concepts of consolidating all their media in one place and the synergy of having it all work together seamlessly. The name also had to avoid any local geographical references, as the network might expand in the future to other localities. Tandem is the perfect name, mapping to the concept of all the various parts of the network working together. Across northern Ohio, businesses looking for the best media advertising opportunities are working in Tandem.

# Crescendo

**PROJECT:** Re-name Riley Genomics, a bioscience company specializing in rheumatoid arthritis diagnostics and treatment.

**CRESCENDO:** Building to a climax.



**BRAND POSITIONING:** Riley Genomics needed a new name to differentiate it from the pack of surname-saddled biotech company names and to support the brand positioning of capturing the excitement of "building momentum" toward better treatment and eventually a cure for the terrible disease that is rheumatoid arthritis. The name Crescendo perfectly conveys the sense of power and the upwelling of hope and joy that is the great promise of their new approach to solving the scourge of rheumatoid arthritis and other rheumatologic disorders.

# Bigfoot

**PROJECT:** Re-name a maintenance management software product.

**BIGFOOT:** Depth, breadth, and a big footprint that covers all areas.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The Smartware Group was forced by a trademark conflict to change the name of its "Smart Maintenance" flagship CMMS (Computerized Maintenance Management System) software product. Since their best-in-class product could not be noticed or remembered because of its generic name, this became a great opportunity to re-brand. The name Bigfoot conveys the depth and breadth of the product over all aspects of a company's maintenance management and immediately differentiates this powerful software platform from its competitors in a way that's very different and memorable, humorous and intelligent.



# Trident University

**PROJECT:** Re-name an online university.

**TRIDENT UNIVERSITY:** A three-pronged featured widely in mythical, historical and modern culture.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** TUI, an online university founded in 1998 that serves all members of the U.S. military, needed to differentiate themselves from an old TUI entity they had split off from, and they wanted a more evocative name that reflected their spirit. But they also needed to retain the acronym "TUI" in respect to all their alumni with degrees from TUI. The new name, Trident University International, perfectly captures their spirit, fits well with their mission and constituent military community, and satisfied all the functional requirements of the project.



# Anthem

**PROJECT:** Name a new cardiac pacemaker.

**ANTHEM:** A rousing, life-affirming chorus.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** In July 2009, a New York woman became the first American recipient of a new generation of wireless cardiac pacemaker that monitors the patient 24/7 via WiFi Internet connection, and that pacemaker was Anthem. An Anthem is a rousing, joyous rallying cry of a song that many people can sing together, just as the Anthem pacemaker "sings" its patient data to the Internet, allowing doctors to monitor patients and catch future heart irregularities before they become critical.

**ANTHEM™**

# Echelon

**PROJECT:** Name a next generation magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine.

**ECHELON:** A successive troop formation, a hierarchical level of authority.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Hitachi Medical has a great reputation for reliability and customer support, and they wanted an easy to remember name that stressed the positioning of excellent image quality, speed and performance, along with efficient, easy operation, reliability and strong ROI. The name Echelon maps well to both the physical nature of the machine (repeated scans of areas of the human body) and to its important place in the hierarchy of diagnostic tools available to the physician.

**ECHELON™**

# Constellation

**PROJECT:** Name for a new business critical nearline enterprise data storage hard drive.

**CONSTELLATION:** A huge number of like items collected together.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** The product is a large capacity drive for deep storage, but housed in a small (2.5-inch disk) form factor. The name needed to convey the following concepts: large amounts of storage, a collection of important items; a central storage repository; the concepts of "infinity" and "continuous." And since the drive is an example of a "Green" technology by virtue of its best-in-class low power consumption, a natural world connection in the name would be great too. The name Constellation supports the positioning requirements beautifully.

**Seagate**  
**Constellation™**

# Acrobat

**PROJECT:** Re-name a family of cardiac surgery products.

**ACROBAT:** A nimble contortionist, strength and flexibility.

**BRAND POSITIONING:** Guidant, whose cardiac surgery division is now owned by Maquet, was determined to replace its failed Axius brand name with a warm, human, memorable name that also mapped to the product function and stand out from the competition. The name Acrobat conveys the powerful combination of strength plus flexibility these cardiac surgery tools provide.

**Acrobat™**

# 7 Criteria For Selecting A Naming Agency

Stephen King wrote, "The scariest moment in writing is just before you start." For many companies, the prospect of hiring a naming agency is filled with nearly as much uncertainty as the process of naming itself. In order to feel more confident with your selection of a naming company, regardless of who you ultimately hire, here are a few things to consider:

1. Check out the agency's portfolio. Have they created any great names? Do they demonstrate the ability to create a range of names, or only a narrow niche? Do any of the names resonate with you?
2. Does the agency have a well-developed process for creating names? Is it transparent and easy to understand, or is it missing in action, hidden behind a proprietary TM-branded "black box" or riddled with alienating biz-speak and obfuscating consultant diagrams?
3. Does the agency have a clear philosophy of naming? Do you get the sense that they live and breathe naming? Does it seem like they enjoy their job?
4. Can you get company principals on the phone to discuss your project, and are they helpful, or are you routed to "account rep" intermediaries?
5. Is the agency a thought leader, or a follower? Are they talking about the same things in the same way as all other naming companies, or do they offer a fresh perspective? Do they have strong opinions that they are not afraid to share? Do they engage in *conversations*, or is it mostly just one-way marketing chatter that's all about them and how awesome they are?
6. Do you get the sense that working with this agency will be an enjoyable experience? Is their process interactive, encouraging your involvement and input? Are they good listeners?
7. Is the agency's own name any good? Does it tell a story? Does it rise above the goods and services being offered? Has the agency invested it with meaning and built a strong brand identity for themselves?

# Colophon

This document will be updated regularly with new content. Get the latest version here:  
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