

How to Create a New Brand Name

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The brand name puts a face on every company. Names like McDonald's, Amazon.com, GM, Apple, Intel, and a host of others have long become significant members of pop culture vocabulary. They've also given consumers a point of reference when thinking about a company.

Many of us don't realize that companies often spend millions of dollars coming up with their names. They hire experts, conduct research, and test the market before making a decision.

In this tutorial we will show you a straightforward way to create new brand names. In this way, by understanding the basic ideas behind name generation, you might be able to avoid these excessive costs - and bring your company greater prosperity.

GENERATE A SET OF ALTERNATIVES

The first step in generating a brand name is to identify a set of associations with the entity -- product, service, website - to be named. Associations are any impressions that current or potential customers may have from your offering (you can read more about this in our [tutorial on branding](#)). For instance, your video store may be convenient, have a large selection, and be family oriented.

Next, look for ways to combine these associations. Here are some ways they can be combined:

- * Combine them into phrases (MarketWatch, TicketMaster)
 - * Generate part of words and combine (Microsoft, Accenture - accent/future))
 - * Use symbols (Oracle, Seven)
 - * Use rhymes
 - * Use humor
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- * Add suffixes or prefixes such as vita, ette, dyne, com, etc.

You can also use words that describe objects that may connote those important associations:

- * Animals (they can connote characteristics like speed or agility)
- * Flowers or Trees (for example, Rose Café connotes elegance and relaxation)
- * Person Types (Craftsman tools connote ability due to the craftsman name)
- * People (this is useful if the names have meaning)
- * Adjectives (QuickPrints is an example)

Or try using metaphors - something that suggests an idea you want

Or try words with no prior associations

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD BRAND NAMES?

Firms usually don't have a lot of time to inform customers about their name, so skillful firms create names that are easy to learn and remember.

So, what makes a brand name easy to learn and remember?

It is sufficiently different to attract attention. Would your firm's name attract your attention if you saw it the first time?

The name evokes interest. Rhymes and humor are some ways to gain interest, but there are others as well. Think about your target audience and what would interest them.

The name elicits a picture or image. Names that do this are "dual coded," in the sense that people remember them most because the name is stored in pictures and words.

The name is meaningful. This is hard to do when you use a nonsense word for a name. It can be overcome with lots of advertising, but names that are inherently more meaningful to customers are more readily stored in memory. More important, the name should have associations that are meaningful to customers in that they convey the benefits that customers want.

The name has some emotion. Emotional associations are easier to learn and remember. The Love Boat, for instance, is very easy to remember.

The name is simple. Simple names are easier to learn and remember than complicated names. Now you know why this it is so difficult to create a new brand name. The best do all of the things we just mentioned but summarize everything in a simple way. Is this impossible? Not really; poets, artists, songwriters and others make their life out of translating complicated ideas into simple language. It takes time and effort.

A FEW MORE THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Before finalizing on a brand name, you should also think about the following issues.

- Does that brand name suggest the product class?
- Does the brand symbol, logo, or slogan support the brand name?
- Does the brand name suggest the desired associations?
- Does the brand name suggest no undesirable associations?
- Is the brand name distinctive and legally defensible?

Now that you have an understanding of what goes into creating a brand name, you may want to hire someone to do this for you. But first give it a try on your own. If someone else did come up with your brand name, use this tutorial as a checklist for determining whether you got your money's worth.