

Getting the Name Right

A good name for your brand can make a huge difference to the success of your company. Would you like it to be well remembered, a name that everyone knows and feels good about? Of course you would, which is why it's worth spending some time thinking about your name and putting in a little effort to get it right.

Here are a few pointers to get you started.

General Rules:

Keep it Simple

A good place to start is to think of a name that is as short and simple as possible. This makes it easy to remember, easy for customers to tell their friends about, and easy to become established.

Good short names: Gap, Apple, Sony

Speak and Spell

Think of your customer! A name which is easy to say and spell will make sure your name rolls off the tongue or pen, and avoids alienating people who may feel stupid if they can't pronounce it.

This is also be a good time to think of names which are fun or pleasurable to say!

Good speak and spell names: Oxo, Google, Bic

F-words (Future and Foreign!)

Are you going to be trading abroad? Do you want your brand name to last over the decades? If so you need to avoid words that have other meanings in foreign languages and do your best to find names that will age well. Names to avoid: Bum (crisps) and Bonka (coffee) are Spanish brands, which clearly aren't planning to trade in the UK. And Camp Coffee has adopted a whole new meaning since it first hit the shelves!

Getting Ideas:

The suggested categories below, are a good place to start thinking of a name, but most names will probably fall somewhere between categories.

Descriptive

What does your business do? How would you categorise your product or service? This is the place most people start, and while it may be good for sparking ideas, it can be the hardest kind of name to register.

Good descriptive names: Blockbuster Video, Shredded Wheat, Burger King

Associative

What are your company's values? Do you want to evoke tradition or are you all about the latest trends, for example? With this kind of name the words used don't describe what you do, they describe the kind of company you are.

Good associative names: Visa (evokes travel and excitement rather than financial borrowings), Southern Comfort (a smooth and mellow experience), O₂ (a breath of fresh air).

Unique

These words are usually abstract and are often invented. They can begin with a core component, such as Coca-Cola (from the coca plant), or be completely made up, like Kodak. This is a very creative way to come up with a name and can be great fun to try.

Good abstract names: Xerox, Zeneca, Brasso, Tesco

Unique names can also be personalised. Does your (or someone else's) name lend itself to your brand? Would you be happy to be at the forefront of your marketing campaigns?

Good personalised names: Disney, Heinz, Kelloggs

Getting Clever

To make your name even more memorable there are a couple of tricks to think about. Alliteration can really help your name to stick in the memory and scores highly in being pleasurable to say.

Good alliterative names: Dunkin Donuts, Kit Kat, Weight Watchers

And then there are shock tactics! What better way to get people remembering and talking about your company!

Good shock names: Sex Pistols, Virgin, FCUK