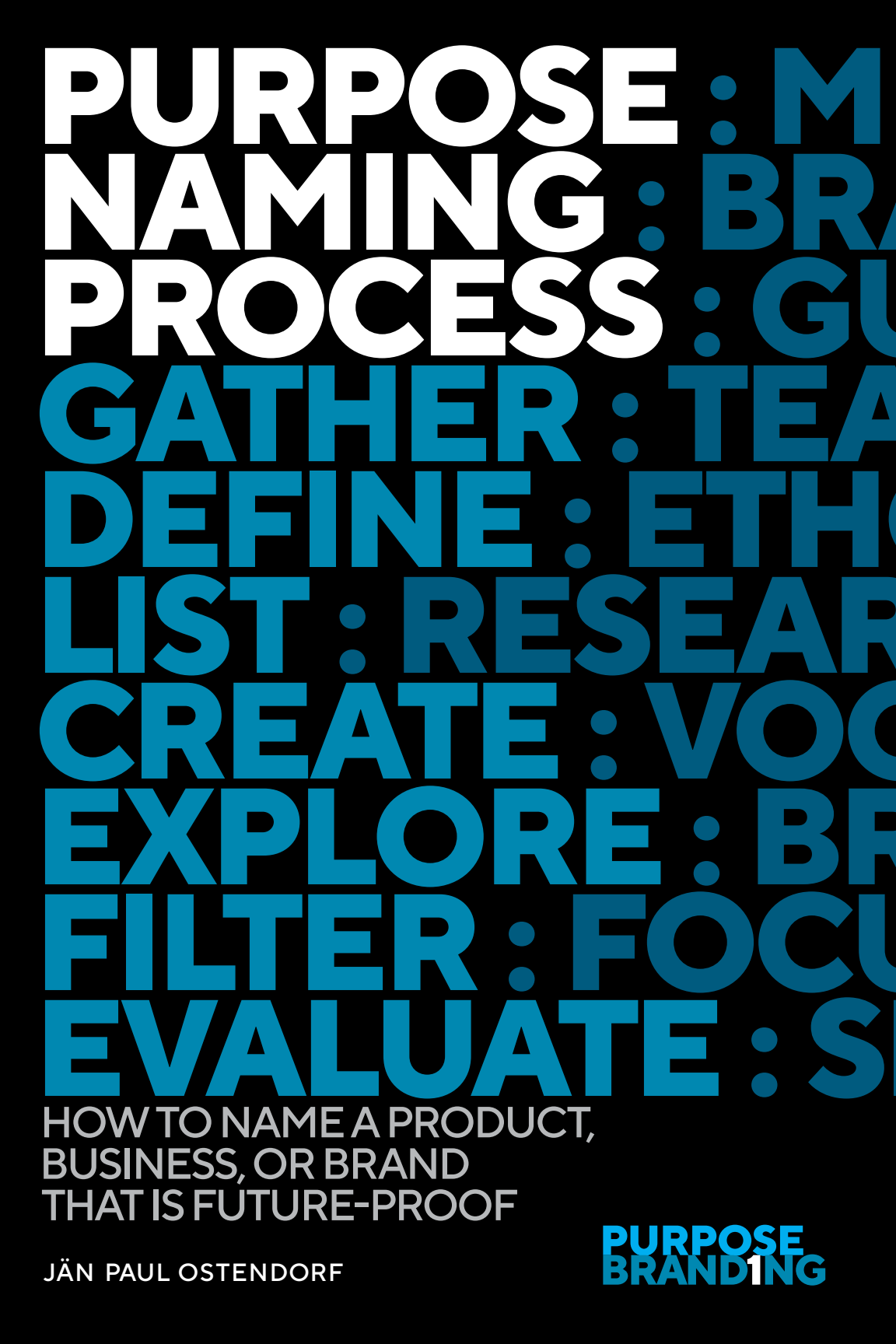


HOW TO NAME A PRODUCT, BUSINESS, OR BRAND THAT IS FUTURE-PROOF

JÄN PAUL OSTENDORF

PURPOSE BRANDING 1

PURPOSE : M
NAMING : BR
PROCESS : GU
GATHER : TEA
DEFINE : ETH
LIST : RESEAR
CREATE : VOC
EXPLORE : BR
FILTER : FOCU
EVALUATE : S

HOW TO NAME A PRODUCT,
BUSINESS, OR BRAND
THAT IS FUTURE-PROOF

JÄN PAUL OSTENDORF

BOOK : CONTENTS
INTRO : GUIDE 1
GATHER : TEAM 7
DEFINE : ETHOS 19
LIST : RESEARCH 29
CREATE : VOCABULARY 41
EXPLORE : IDEATE 51
FILTER : FOCUS 67
EVALUATE : SELECT 73
REVEAL : EXAMPLES 79

INTRO : GUIDE

At-A-Glance

- This book is a real, honest-to-God "How to" on the naming process
- The apex of the process is brainstorming, where most "how-tos" don't provide much help
- How to eliminate the most difficult issues in the naming process: a blank page and no guardrails
- How to implement AI and LLM model tools to help the process
- How to create and use a "Common Guidepost" to collaborate throughout the process
- A methodology. Not searching for a cool, trendy, or different for difference's sake name

1 : Gather Team

2 : Define Ethos

3 : List & Research

4 : Create Vocabulary

5 : Explore & Ideate

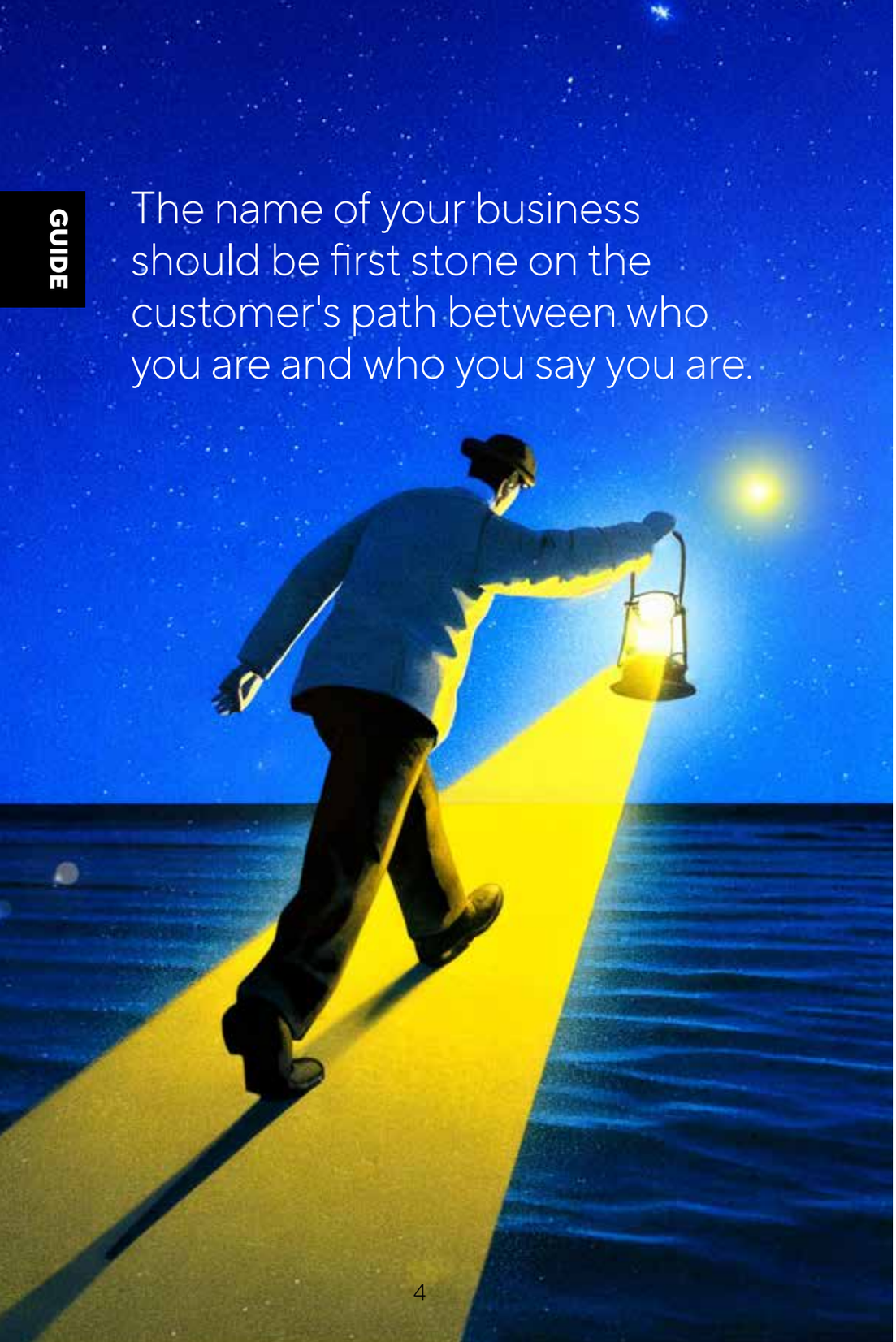
6 : Filter & Focus

7 : Evaluate & Select

When you need a good product or business name, you don't need a long list of "What makes a good Name," an in-depth study on the history of branding, or a list of naming conventions like Descriptive, Invented, or Evocative. While branding books and naming agency websites may suggest qualities like memorability or legal protectability, they rarely offer a clear, practical method. Many naming guides I've read bury the process under excessive fluff—one took 130 pages to reach, and the other book's process jumped from "Step 4: Establish Criteria" to "Step 5: Filter your top 100 names down to 25" without explaining how they created the list of 100. The world needs a meat-and-potatoes, honest-to-God process with simple brainstorming exercises.

It is vital part of the naming process — the generating of the name ideas. This book will provide you with a framework and step-by-step process that's easy to implement and has been effective hundreds of times. It will eliminate two of the most difficult situations to overcome during the naming process: a blank page and not having guardrails.

One way to eliminate "the blank page creative block" and get started quickly is using AI and LLM (Large Language Models) to generate ideas. They will work better when you feed (or provide a prompt) that is reflective of what you are trying to achieve. The old saying, "Garbage in. Garbage out." is true and in this case — vague prompts will provide overused results and a name that is ineligible for trademark protection. So, beware. Just because it



shows up on an AI generated list, it doesn't mean it may not already be being used. This is where creating "guardrails" (or requirements) for your name will be imperative. We will be covering that in the Define: Ethos" chapter.

How will you know if it is the right name for your company or product? You are so close and emotionally connected that making an unbiased decision is hard. Like most creative projects, the "I know it when I see it" philosophy is a recipe for disaster. So, we have a chart that you can use to evaluate all the names, as well as a Purpose Statement (a shared measuring stick) to make sure it hits the nail on the head. A great name will scare you, so you must look back at your Desired Brand Attributes for justification and validation.

This book will provide a way for this process to be collaborative. It will help you get the right people on the bus with the change — gaining momentum and excitement about the new name. It will allow the visionary, CEO, and marketing professional to participate. It will allow a full C-suite team (I've had up to 25, but I don't recommend it. The more people you have the harder it is and the longer it takes.) to participate in the process. It keeps the leadership from asking, "Why did we choose this name and not that one I liked early in the process?"

Now, let's talk team.

GATHER : TEAM

At-A-Glance

- Who should you include in the naming process
- What roles need to participate
- Determine parameters and define success
- Signs of a good Naming Agency
- Average costs for outside help

Who and Why

Who you want to participate in the naming process can vary depending on the business structure, number of departments and directors that report directly to the CEO. There are roles or areas of expertise you would like participants to bring to the team. How many people are needed to fill those roles depends on their experience — one person can cover more than one role or you can have more than one person covering a role. The important thing is having someone looking at the name from that angle so nothing is overlooked.

The roles are...

- The Visionary
- The Creative
- The Customer Connection
- The Naming Professional

IDEAL ROLES TO INCLUDE IN THE NAMING TEAM

The Visionary

Common Titles: Inventor, Founder, CEO, Business Partner, Director of Product Development, or Brand Manager.

Responsibility

- Is the vision being addressed
- Authority to provide strategic business direction
- Make the final call

The Creative

Common Titles: Marketing Director, Brand Designer, Creative Director, Web Designer, or someone with Creative Writing experience (writes advertising headlines).

Responsibility

- How would the name traverse the verbal-to-visual gap
- Be thinking about the visual representation of the identity
- Provide creative ideas for name generation

The Customer Connection

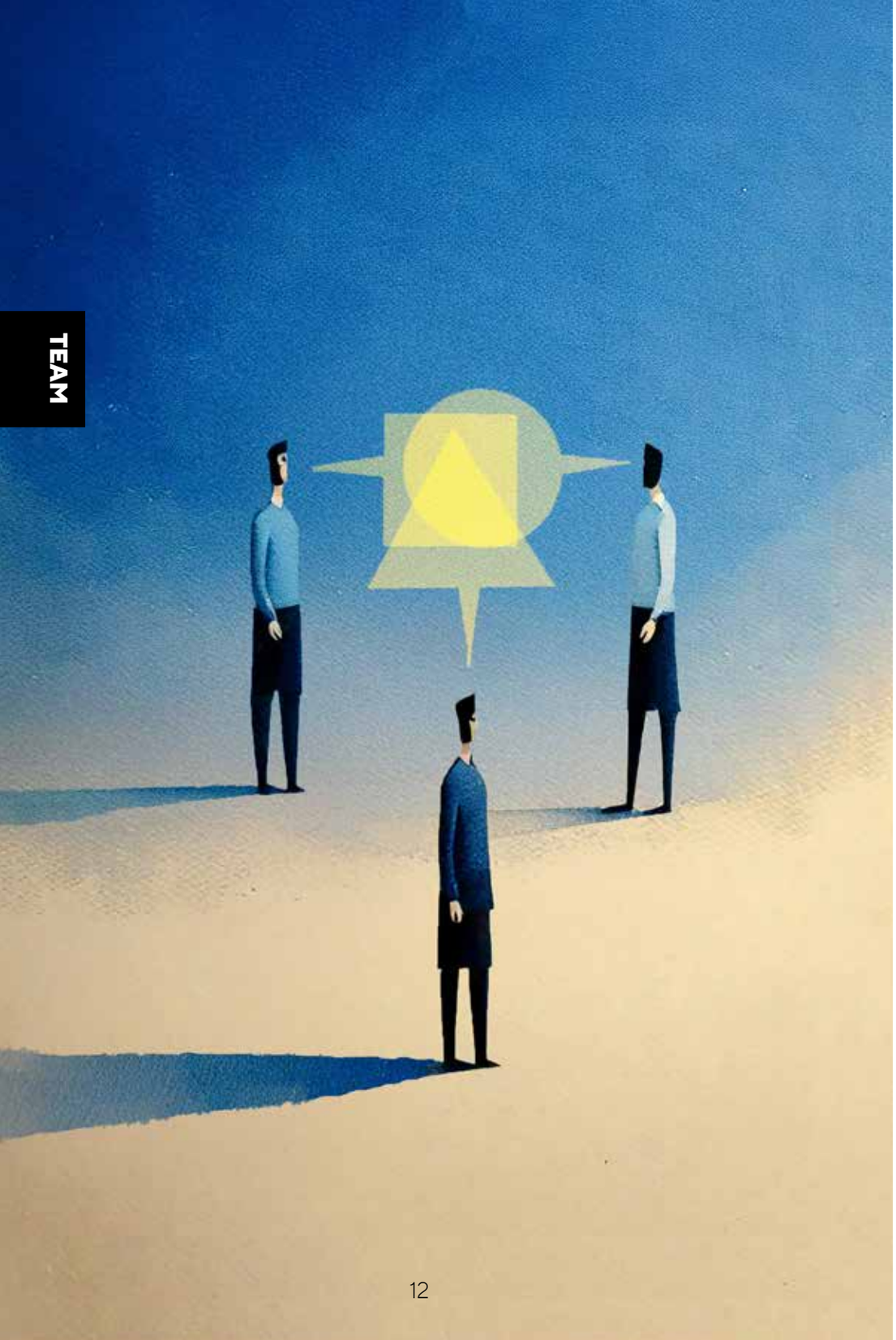
Common Titles: Sales Director, Customer Service, Salesperson (anyone who attends Tradeshows), and anyone with an active relationship with customers. A marketing person who has done some customer relations or survey work.

Responsibility

- Would the name speak to the customer's pain point
- Provide an understanding of the customer's psyche
- Provide ideas for name generation

The Naming Professional

The naming professional should have a combination of experience from one or two of these categories. You want them to have more than writing experience. If the Naming Agency has a heavy emphasis on language and English only, have someone on your team (a Visual Creative Professional) thinking about how the name will translate when you start the visual branding phase.



Typical Team Size and Makeup

With the aforementioned mentioned roles, the smallest team size imaginable would be a two-person team of the CEO and a Naming Professional with Visual Brand Experience. Typically the average-sized teams are between four to eight people consisted of the anyone from the C-Suite and Director level that wants to be a part of the team.

The largest group I've had was all the director-level positions (22 in number) plus the CEO, CFO, and myself — 25. Keep in mind that teams of that size make the process timeline longer and more costly. However, sometimes it's necessary when there is significant reservation concerning the name change. It is a revolutionary change for a company especially when it's decades old. I've worked with two, one-hundred-plus-year-old, companies on a rebrand, and it can be a challenge. A change of this magnitude may require the time and finesse to get everyone on board and moving in the same direction.

Signs of a Good Naming Agency

First Sign: Does the Naming Agency have an exceptional name for their company? If they don't why not? I think that is a fair requirement of a Naming Agency.

Second Sign: Ask about their philosophy guiding the naming process. If they do, does it resonate with you?

Third Sign: What is their process? Is the process collaborative? Will you be able to participate in the process, or is it a black box with a surprise at the end?

Can any Advertising Agency or Design Firm handle a Naming Project?

Short answer: Yes, or at least they say they can. However, be careful when you hire a company that doesn't have regular practice and experience carrying out naming projects. Verify they have a dedicated naming professional (not a writer or messaging person that can jump in and help) on staff and have done this many times. Trademark Attorneys have shared horror stories of their clients hiring their Agency of record (well-known and considered prestigious) to develop a name. They spent tens of thousands of dollars for a few pages of names; none passed the trademark search.

What does success look like

Before you hire anyone or even start the naming process yourself, determine the parameters of the name and define what success looks like.

Q : Is it for a product, business, or brand?

Q : Does it need to fit into a family of brands?

Q : Does it have a parent company?

Q : Will the product develop into an ecosystem of products (iPhone, iPad, iMac, etc.)?

Q : What is the audience's demographics?

Q : If a trademark is needed, will it be national or international?

Q : Is a separate product or business URL needed?

What can you expect to pay for a professional?

Cost can vary widely depending on whether the business is local, national, or international. Whether the name needs to be Trademarked, how competitive is the industry or market segment? Will the brand be franchised? To provide some numbers, "Branding for Dummies" lists names starting at $10,000 and going up to $75,000.

Looking at the cost of URLs — rare and premium addresses like “Insurance.com” sold for $35 million. A desirable URL can be $2,000 to $50,000, completely depending on the seller. The best thing to do is to look for a URL while naming so you can find one for $20.

Every entrepreneur wants to create the next NIKE or Tesla but doesn't necessarily want to pay for a name of that stature. Yes, a name of that stature takes time to develop. It takes many years of delivering on the brand promise to grow to that level. However, the brand will not get there if it doesn't have a great foundation of a great name from the start.

Is Creative Financing a Possibility?

If you can not afford the lump sum payment, it is worth asking if the naming agency has other financing options. They should be willing to entertain the idea of an alternative method. If not, maybe that will provide the answer of who to work with you've been looking for.

PERCENTAGE OF OWNERSHIP

If you are a Startup, offer a percentage of ownership or non-voting stock. In this scenario, the naming agency has a vested interest in your success. It allows the startup to get a complete identity and branding accomplished when it can afford it least and needs it the most.

PAYMENTS

Sign a contract to pay over time — making monthly payments (after a sizable down payment) or allow the agency to own the rights to the brand and the business to pay a royalty or rights of usage fee on a yearly or monthly basis with a buyout clause. This may not be the best path for every agency-company relationship. The agency may not want to take the risk of an unknown and unproven company to receive their full due over time.

DEFINE : ETHOS

At-A-Glance

- Purpose of business
- Vision and mission statements
- Purpose statement
- Defining your business's purpose

Why Define Your Company's Ethos

Everyone wants potential customers to just "get it" and "understand our value." There's one way to do that successfully. Communicate who you are as clearly as possible. That doesn't mean plain and boring, although that does happen, e.g., Toys "R" Us. Another way is like these toy companies: The Imaginarium, Giggles, or Kido. Two of these names stand out because you can immediately understand why they exist—build children's imagination and make kids laugh.

Defining your ethos is about understanding what you client receives over and above an object or service. How are you different than your competition?

The Purpose of Business

In the book Good to Great, Jim Collins writes, "Companies need to exist for a higher purpose than mere profit generation in order to transcend the category of merely good."

And Simon Sinek says, "People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it." And Professor Wayne Baker at Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, "There is a psychological need to contribute. People need to contribute. The reciprocity principle — the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to repay – is universal. It is a principle component

of all moral codes. The principle is so fundamental that it defines humanity. The need to contribute to others and to accept contributions from others is hard-wired into us as a species."

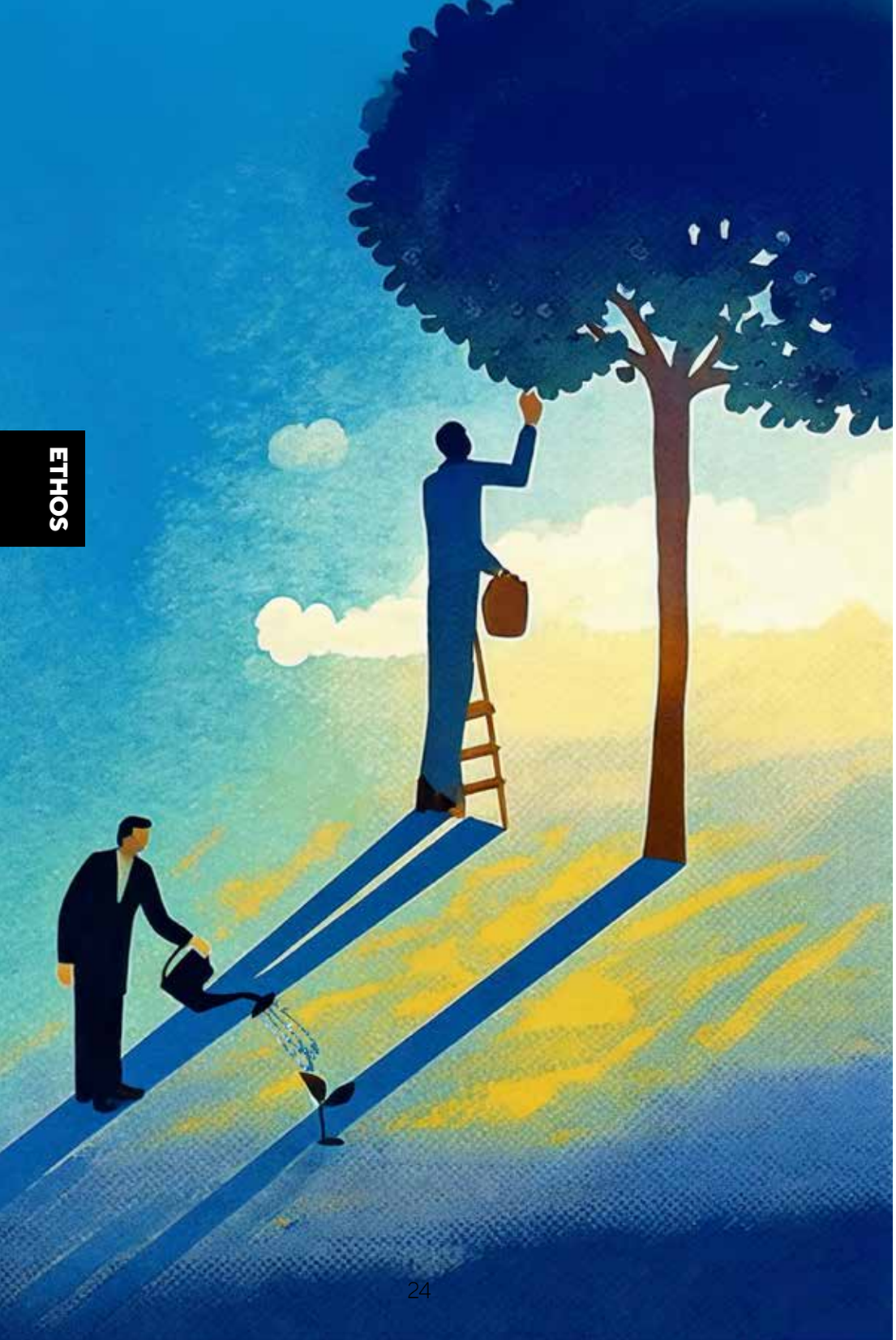
David Straker, an educator, coach, and author in business and personal change, states, "When we contribute, we connect with the world. When we make a difference, we create meaning for our lives. The contribution goes beyond the self. In this way, we connect with the world, expanding our sense of identity. Contribution helps us to connect with others as they thank and trust us. We can often contribute to others, which can be a crucial driver of people engaging in voluntary work. Contribution is a key evolutionary driver that provokes people to help others within the community or tribe — this leads to group success."

In short, purpose is the purpose of business. Every company has one. It may not be clearly defined or articulated yet, but it's there. Purpose doesn't need to be "saving the world" or "overcoming evil in the world." It's not completely philanthropic or religious, although those are easy to identify "purpose" than a for-profit business.

Often purpose is found in the driving force of those who started the business. Usually, it resides in the minds and intents of the company's leadership. Yes, there was a "wrong" that needed "righted" to some degree. Maybe it was to create a work environment that they looked forward to. Maybe it was a "better way" or a "better product."

The clearer and more precise the company communicates its purpose (both visually and verbally — internally and externally), the stronger its brand, the greater its growth, and the more desirable the culture is. They attract the right employees and the right customers for the right reasons.

Purpose allows people to identify with the business in something other than the material product it provides. It makes them feel good about supporting it and justifies sharing it with others — what all companies strive to achieve.



To define your purpose, answer these questions:

Q : What are you trying to change?

Q : What does the world need that doesn't exist yet?

Q : What problem are you solving?

Q : What pain are you eliminating?

Q : What excited you about the business?

Q : What is it (psychological reward) about the "ideal client" or "ideal business transaction" that gives you energy?

Your business purpose is in there somewhere, i.e., you don't sell cars; you sell freedom. You don't sell software; you sell productivity. It's not about the "thing" it's about what that "thing" provides — the emotional benefit of using that "thing."

A few examples on the next two pages show how the purpose drives the vision and mission and builds culture.

The **mission** is how you will achieve the what.

The **vision** is a tangible result—what change will you make.

The **purpose** is the driving force behind why you're in business.

EXAMPLES OF PURPOSE, VISION, & MISSION

SpaceX

PURPOSE : Extend consciousness beyond Earth

VISION : To be a multi-planetary species

MISSION : To revolutionize space travel and technology to establish a self-sustaining city on Mars.

CULTURE : At SpaceX, we redefine boundaries and set new standards by encouraging our teams to take risks. Through a diverse workforce, we will foster a culture of creativity and problem-solving to navigate the complex challenges of space travel and drive innovation.

Patagonia

PURPOSE : Enjoy and live in harmony with nature

VISION : A love of wild and beautiful places demands participation in the fight to save them

MISSION : Build the best product so people can enjoy nature. We aim to cause no unnecessary harm, and use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.

CULTURE : Bringing together those who love environmental stewardship, quality, integrity, activism, and social responsibility by encouraging our employees to volunteer in environmental initiatives and prioritize using only the best sustainable materials and production methods.

IKEA

PURPOSE : Better living for everyone

VISION : Create a better everyday life

MISSION : To offer a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at low prices that as many people as possible can afford.

CULTURE : IKEA's culture is based on Swedish values and is characterized by simplicity, togetherness, and a cost-conscious mindset. IKEA's culture also encourages employees to be innovative and collaborative.

KFC

PURPOSE : Delight people with food

VISION : Let the world enjoy my famous recipe chicken

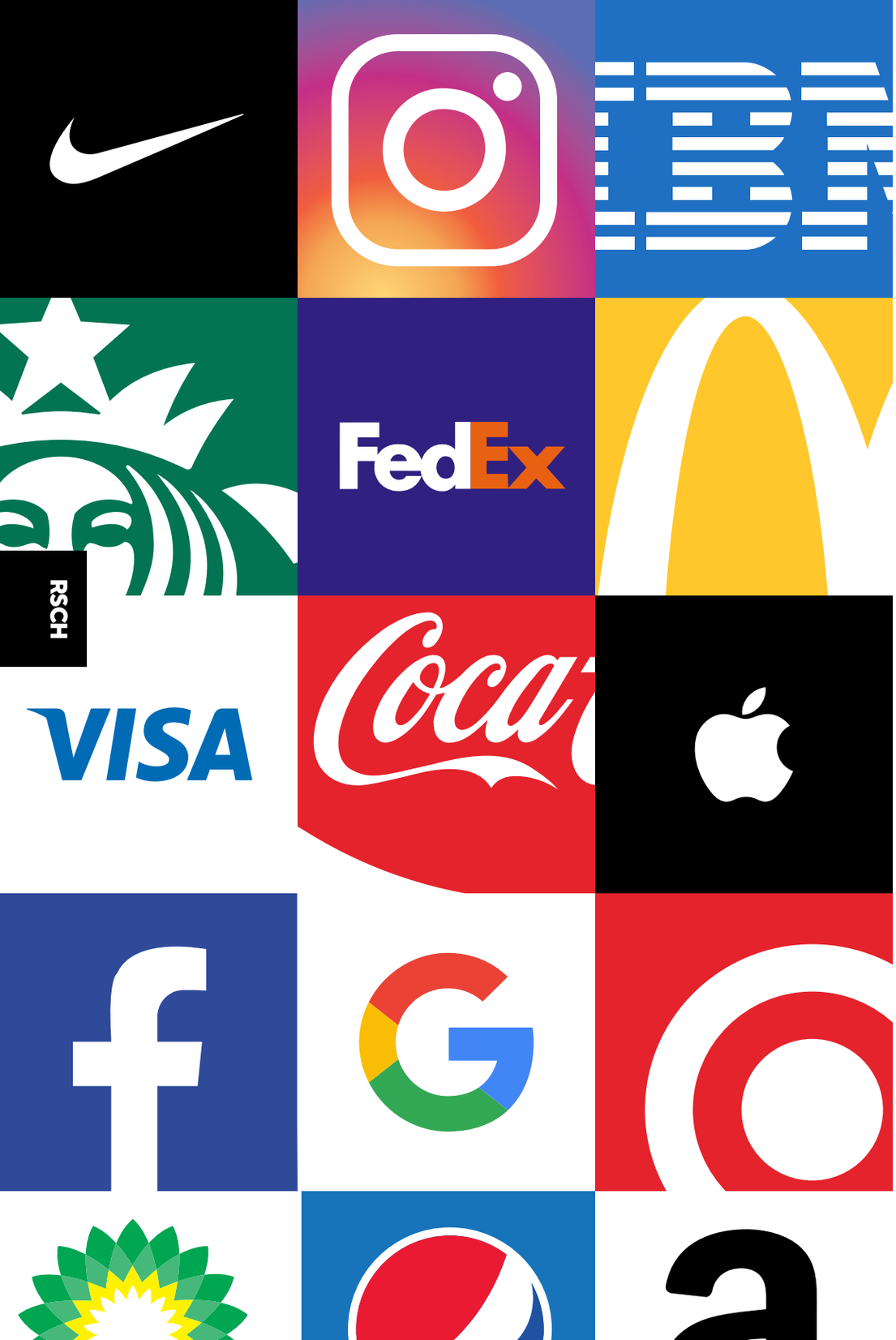
MISSION : By the year 2020, have over 20,000 KFC restaurants in over 125 countries that cook the best and only famous recipe chicken in each and every store daily.

CULTURE : We are cooks who continue the legacy of Colonel Sanders, the original cook. We are building on 70 years of success and innovative recipes, starting with the original famous chicken recipe. We will strive to bring the best chicken at an affordable price to the entire world.

LIST : RESEARCH

At-A-Glance

- Brandscape
- List names, directions, and ideas to avoid
- Visual brandscape map
- Valuable lessons



Research the Brandscape

Take time to research—knowing what you are and are not.

Step One Know yourself

Step Two Know your competition.

When doing your competitive analysis, note what names are being used for competing companies or products, and stay clear of these names. You do not want to be confused with another company.

Low Hanging Fruit

Top-of-mind Names: Write down all those first impressions or names that come to mind quickly. Do a quick Google search or use AI. Get all those over-used, top-of-mind, and common names on the whiteboard. Get all these out of your system and out of the way—another list to avoid.

NAME TAXONOMY CHART OF INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE BRANDS

functional	invented	experiential	evocative
			Virgin
jetBlue AIRWAYS			
		zip	tailwind AIRLINES
Alitalia		go	
	Mexicana		
airTran			
		Air Paradise International	
AIRFRANCE			

All trademarks, logos, and brand names on these pages as well as throughout the book are the property of their respective owners.

How well does your brand stand out from your competitors?

Buzz Words: Try to eliminate all those industry jargon and acronyms that only your industry understands — unless you are selling to the industry exclusively.

Finding Open Space

The main takeaway is you are looking for open space. Do not get discouraged by the list you find. Analyze what you like and why. Note those doing a good job with their name, brand, messaging, etc., and use it as fuel to rise above your competition.

It may sound like busy work to make a list like this. It may even seem unnecessary, "We know who our competitors are." However, there is power in putting all their brands and their names before your eyes. And it can save you heartache from falling in love with a name that is already taken and save you money trying to trademark a name that is not available.

A Cloud Hosting Service Company (opposite page) and the visual brandscape their company and brand resided in. We knew immediately we would not create any blue rectangle logos for this client or names that used the word "cloud." See page 94 for the complete rename and rebrand of the cloud service company called Donet.

◀ A Logo gallery of Cloud Hosting Service Companies that was renamed and rebranded. See page 94

THE ONLINESS STATEMENT

EXPLANATION : DESCRIPTION

We are the only **type of business**
that **provides a unique product or service**
for **target audience**
geographic location
who want **customer emotional motivation**
during a **time of cultural trend**

EXAMPLE : HARLEY DAVIDSON

We are the only **motorcycle manufacturer**
that **makes big, loud motorcycles**
for **macho guys (and macho wannabes)**
mostly in the United States
who want to **join a gang of cowboys**
during a **time of decreasing personal freedom**

FILL IN : YOUR BUSINESS

We are the only _____
that _____
for _____
_____
who want to _____
during a _____

Exercise found in the book, *Zag: The number one strategy of high-performance brands*

A Fortune 500 company approached me to name a new software product they were developing. After providing them with an estimate, they decided to utilize their internal Marketing Department to handle the project. I understood they wanted to allocate as many resources as they could to finish up and polish the product development — debugging, UI, UX, etc. It was a business decision made at the C-suite level. Months passed, and the new product was launched. We learned of its debut and its almost immediate "Cease and Desist Order" by their competitor's Law Firm. They had not done the least bit of research on names used by their competitors nor a preliminary Trademark Search. After all the websites, software, advertising, and marketing materials were created, they had to rebrand and rename. They spent twice as much money as my initial estimate fixing their error, not to mention lost time and sales. Take the time and do the work no matter how unnecessary it may seem. Every time I've let a client push me to shortcut my process, it has always bit me (and us) in the butt.

The Onliness Statement

One of my favorite exercises is "The Onliness Statement" that is found in the book ZAG. It's a great exercise in focusing your market position and keeping your company from trying to be all things to all people.

POSITIONING GRID

Premium Price	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Low Price
Advanced	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Accepted
Service-Oriented	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Product-Oriented
Systems-Oriented	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Product-Oriented
Fun	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Serious
Large/Resourceful	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Small/Agile
High Quality	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Good Value
Expected	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Unexpected
Trusted Advice	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	New Ideas
Industry Leader	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Up-and-Coming
Generalists	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Specialists
Craftsmen	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Technologists
Mainstream	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Maverick
Stable	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Opportunistic
Problem-Solvers	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Self-Serve
Friendly	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Authoritative
Playful	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Serious
Evocative	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Sophisticated
Bold	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Subtle
Mass	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	Niche

Positioning Grid

The positioning grid helps you determine how you want to be known. You can tailor this how you see fit by deleting or adding descriptors based on your industry.

You are looking for any attributes that are strong (far left or right). If everyone answers each attribute all down the middle, this will be no help and it means no one wants to take a risk or alienate a potential customer. Remember, you can't be all things to all people.

Name Requirements

Take some time with your direct reports (Director of Sales, Marketing Director, etc.) to determine any communication problems you want the new name to help solve.

Go to "Evaluate" section (page 76) of this book and look through the list of criteria, one of those might be a "must-have" rather than a "nice-to-have" requirement.

Add any of your words from your Vocabulary List to your Evaluation Form as an important requirement to meet.

Questions to help determine your new name requirements:

Q : What is the number one misconception new customers have about your company?

Q : Is your website the primary customer interaction?

Q : Is your industry crowded with similar sounding names and being different than all the rest important?

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS CHART

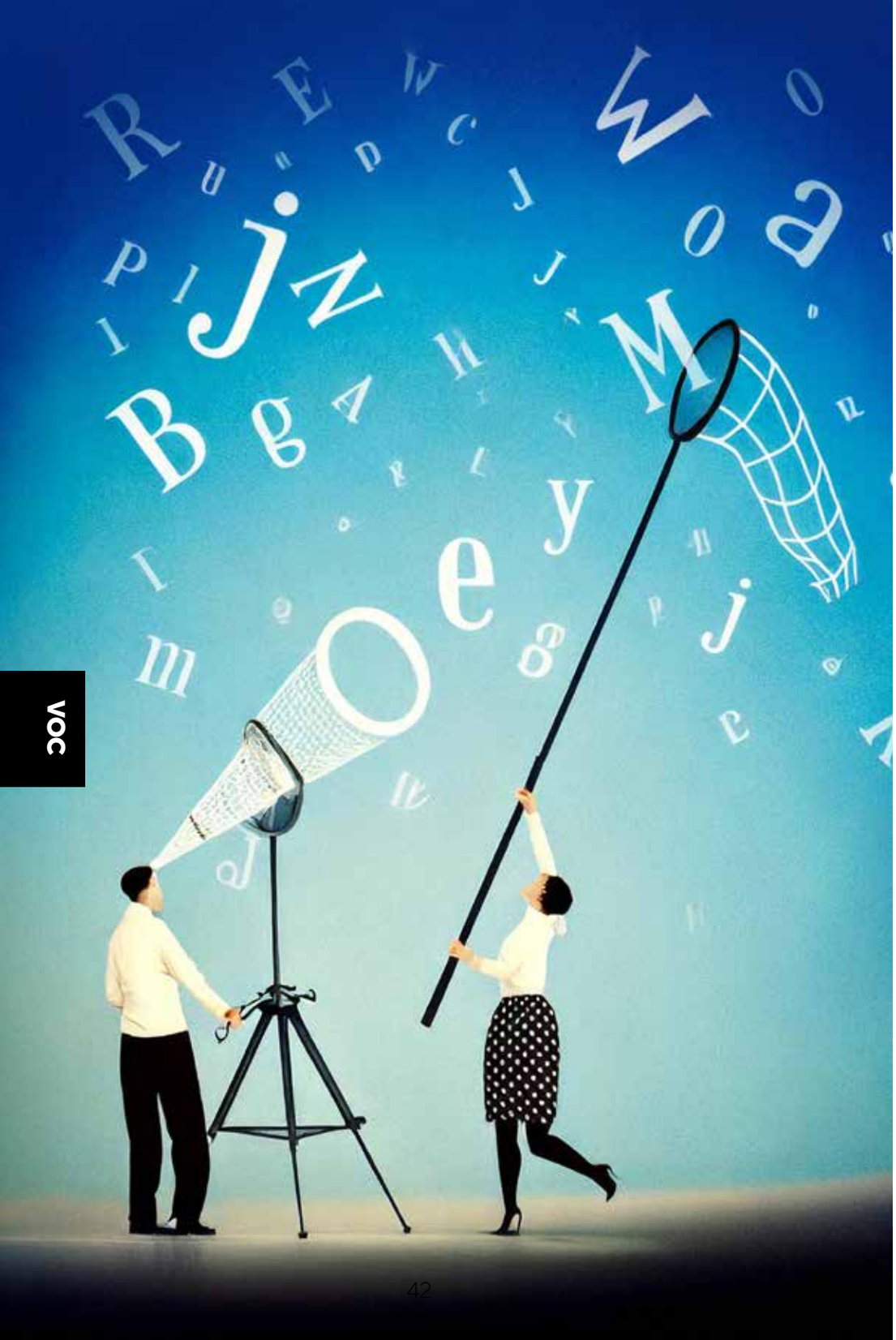
Create and share a common document with your team so anyone can quickly review or reference anytime during the naming process—making sure you do not look and sound like everyone else.

Brandmark/Logo	Name Meaning	Tagline/Positioning	About/ Call Themselves	Brand Voice
2020 exhibits Exhibits • Events • Environments	Clear communications. Started selling banners and pop-up displays	Building Memorable Experiences	Building Global Brands through Engaging & Dynamic Experiences, Exhibits, Events, and Environments	Straightforward marketing tone

CREATE : VOCABULARY

At-A-Glance

- The Brand Vocabulary List
- Where does the Brand Vocabulary List live
- Questions that will help you create the list
- Brand Archetypes



Where the magic happens, or your brain fries

These next two steps are the apex of the process (see schedule on page 52) and are where you will spend most of the time. Not too many books do a deep dive into the exploratory phase. Most provide instructions such as "list your name ideas" without practical advice on brainstorming name ideas. There are many naming AI sites now, and they can help, but like most "systems," garbage in, garbage out. What you feed it is important. The Brand Vocabulary List are some of those words you would want to feed it.

What's a Brand Vocabulary List (BVL)?

You are creating a list of words (a short list of around five words) that have positive semantic associations with your company's purpose, product, or service. One word could be the brand archetype or archetype (no more than two) that best describes the company's personality. For each word in the vocabulary list, you generate a list down the column (see page 45).

Where does the Brand Vocabulary List (BVL) live?

Create a cloud-shareable spreadsheet (like the one shown on page 45) with your team. The BVL will live in the header across the top of your spreadsheet. These five words become the pillars from which to create names. You will want to "freeze" the header so it is viewable as you scroll down the columns when your list gets long.

Example: A Children's Museum

Purpose Encourage learning through discovery

Archetype The Creator

Vocabulary List Engage, Create, Explore, Discover, & Imagine

Then, during the brainstorming phase, you will list ideas under each main theme or Brand Vocabulary Word running down the column.

Questions to help create the Brand Vocabulary List :

Q : What is the one thing your company or product does that is better than everyone else?

Q : What words describe the beneficial outcomes of the new product or its experience?

- An HVAC Co. = Comfort
- A Software Co = Productivity

Q : What are your core values? One of your core Values might be on your BVL such as, Innovation, Caring.

Q : How do you make your customers feel when your company or product has helped?

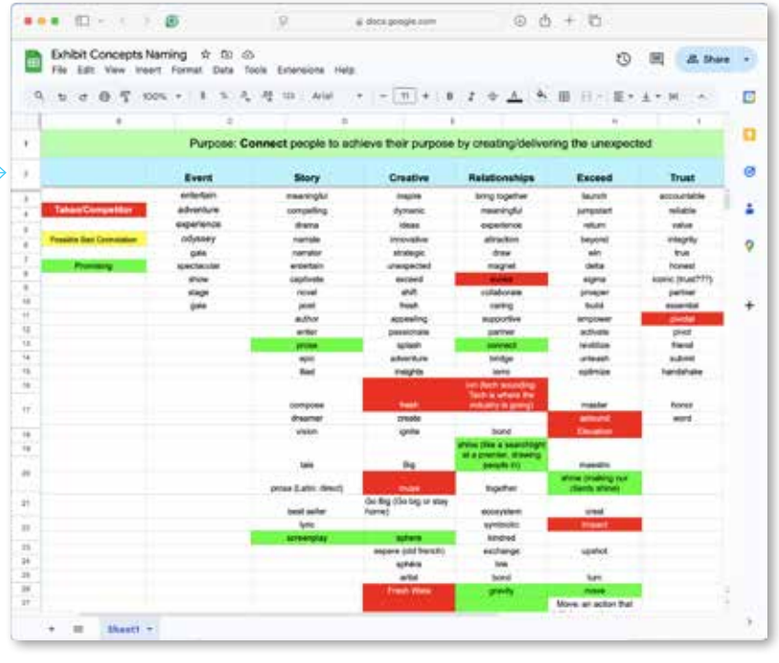
Q : Is there anything tangible that gets delivered?

Q : How does it do it?

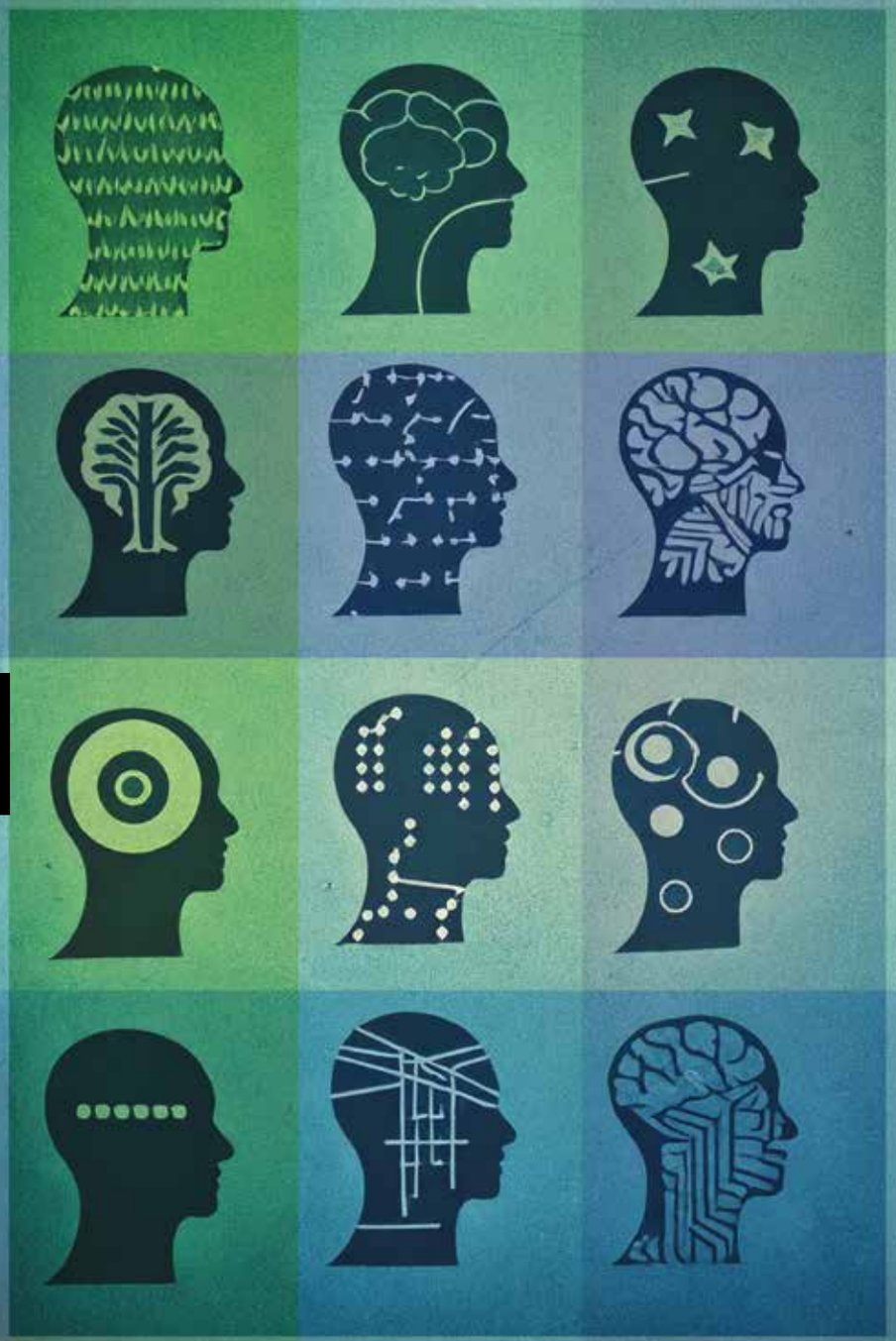
Q : Is there an Archetype (see pages 47-49) associated with your product or Service? e.g. Repair Service = Caregiver or Rescue Worker

EXAMPLE OF SHAREABLE NAMING SPREADSHEET

Use a Fixed Header Row for your Brand Vocabulary List



Brand Vocabulary List is in the light blue second row in the image above. Keep the "Purpose" in the header along with any other statements that you need to keep top-of-mind like the Vision and Mission Statements. Fill in the cells red if the trademark is unavailable or name is too close to a competitor's name. Yellow if someone on the team has mentioned issues or problems. And green if there has been some positive responses or "directions" you want to explore.



Introduction to Brand Archetypes

Archetypes are universal characters that we can identify with—those that exemplify a type of motivation and direction in life. The word originates from the Greek meaning "original pattern or model." It describes what drives a person to act the way they do. The most important aspect is the emotional benefit that the recipient receives from that character's attributes. It goes back to the emotional driver, the unspeakable attraction of why people engage with the brand besides an exchange of physical goods or services. On the next two pages this Emotional Driver is indicated with a ➔ at the end of each archetype description.

TWELVE MAIN ARCHETYPE FAMILIES

TYPE	IN HISTORY	MODERN EXAMPLE	ORGANIZATION
The Explorer	Columbus	Neil Armstrong	Virgin, VISA
The Innocent	Snow White	Martin Luther King	Coca-Cola
The Sage	Jesus	Obi-wan	Google, Forbes
The Hero	King Arthur	Luke Skywalker	Marines, Nike
The Rebel	Robin Hood	Steve Jobs	Harley Davidson
The Magician	Houdini	President Kennedy	Disney, Amazon
Regular Guy/Gal	Honest Abe	Homer Simpson	Safe Auto, Chevy
The Lover	Romeo	Casanova	AXE, Godiva
The Jester	Court Jester	Will Ferrell	eTrade, Old Spice
The Caregiver	Good Samaritan	Mother Theresa	Red Cross
The Creator	Michelangelo	Thomas Edison	General Electric
The Ruler	Caesar	Rockefeller	Mercedes-Benz

Archetype Descriptions

➔ The emotional benefit the customer receives from the archetype.

THE EXPLORER, INNOCENT, & SAGE

The Explorer, Innocent, and Sage all value self over others and independence over belonging to a group. They also are all in some way seeking utopia and a sense of fulfillment; Explorer in new experiences, Innocent in simple life, and Sage in the pursuit of truth and knowledge.

EXPLORER

Explorers help people feel free. They are nonconforming and pioneering. Often times, Explorers are rugged and sturdy or useful in the great outdoors or in dangerous settings. Explorers help people express their individuality. Many times the product they represent can be purchased for consumption on the go, a catalog or internet.

➔ The recipient looks for the best companies that provide continual improvements.

INNOCENT

Innocents pride themselves in offering a simple solution to a problem. This Archetype associates itself with goodness, morality, simplicity, nostalgia, or childhood. Often times, the products are at low or moderate pricing. The Innocent represents companies with straightforward values and differentiate themselves from brands with poor reputations.

➔ The recipient looks for a company they can trust that will help them keep their life simple.

SAGE

Sages provide expertise or information to customers. They encourage customers to think and analyze. Sometimes their advice is based on new scientific findings or esoteric knowledge supported by research-based facts. Sages differentiate themselves from other brands whose quality or performance is suspect.

➔ The recipient needs to know specifics about a product or service. They also like products where learning is involved.

THE HERO, REBEL, & MAGICIAN

The Hero, Rebel, and Magician all come from a sense of power to change their reality. In order to do so, they all take risks that personally put themselves in precarious situations to prove themselves by rising to every challenge.

HERO

Heroes love inventions or innovations that will have a major impact on the world. They are driven to help people be all they can be and help solve a major social problem or encourage others to do so. They attract those that have a clear opponent they need to beat. Sometimes they are underdog or challenger brands. Their products and services are strong and help people do tough jobs exceptionally well. Heroes differentiate themselves from competitors that have problems following through or keeping their promises.

➔ The recipient looks for products or services that allow them to change the world.

REBEL

Rebels appeal to customers or employees who feel disenfranchised from society. They help retain values that are threatened by emerging ones. They pave the way for revolutionary new attitudes. Rebels pride themselves in breaking with industry conventions.

➔ The recipient looks for products or services that allow them to achieve their aims.

MAGICIAN

Magicians promise to transform customers lives or problems with products or services that are transformative. They may have a new-age quality. They work in the world of consciousness-expanding. Often times they are a user-friendly or contemporary company. Magicians often have spiritual connotations, but not always.

➔ The recipient looks for products or services that make changes and have an impact.

REGULAR GUY/GAL, LOVER, & JESTER

The Regular Guy/Gal, Lover, and Jester all provide ways and means for people to connect and interact with others; the Regular Guy/Gal makes people feel comfortable enough to connect, the Lover makes people feel good about themselves, and the Jester not to take themselves too seriously to connect.

REGULAR GUY/GAL

Regular Guys /Gals provide people with a sense of belonging. Their products or services offer everyday functionality with low to moderate pricing. They are often solid companies with a down-home organizational culture and differentiate themselves from elitist or higher-priced brands.

➔ The recipient looks for brands that help them connect or feel connected to others.

LOVER

Lovers are motivated to attract, give, and make customers feel good about themselves. Promoting a way of being more than just an emotion. They create a freewheeling, fun-loving organizational structure that values collaboration. Lovers differentiate themselves from self-important, overconfident brands.

➔ The recipient looks for products or services that allow them to feel beautiful.

JESTER

Jesters disarm barriers with humor and make people feel a part of the human experience. They joyfully live in the moment and want people to relax and enjoy themselves. Jesters see things differently and can deliver the painful truth without causing pain. They break with social norms, status quo, and traditions while seeing the world as a playground for their antics.

➔ The recipient looks for products or services that allow them to not take life too seriously.

THE CAREGIVER, CREATOR, & RULER

The Caregiver, Creator, and Ruler are all driven by providing order and structure to have a sense of control of the world around them; the Caregiver by helping with the problems of others, the Creator by creating a product or business to add beauty, and the Ruler by trying to make life predictable and stable through taking charge.

CAREGIVER

Caregivers give customers a competitive advantage in life. They often support families (products from fast-food to minivans) or are associated with nurturing (e.g. cookies, teaching materials). They serve in the public sector (e.g. health care, education, aid programs, etc). Caregivers are likely to be non-profit organizations or charitable causes.

➔ The recipient looks for products or services that allow them to help others.

CREATOR

Creators promote self-expression, give customers choices and options, help foster innovation, or are artistic in design. They are found in creative fields like marketing, public relations, the arts, or technological innovation. They differentiate themselves from "do-it-all" brands that leave little room for the imagination. Their organizations have a creative culture.

➔ The recipient looks for products or services that allow them create and build.

RULER

Rulers are high-status products or services used by powerful people to enhance their power. They make people more organized and often offer a lifetime guarantee to their products or services. They empower people to maintain or enhance their grip on power or a sense of control. They differentiate themselves from populist brands by being market leaders offering a sense of security and stability in a chaotic world.

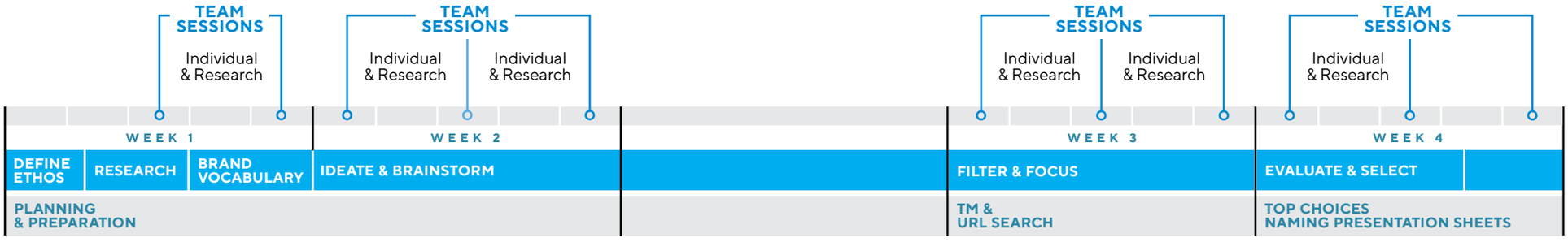
➔ The recipient looks for products or services that allow them control their life.

At-A-Glance

- Timeline
- Using AI, LLMs, and other software tools like Chat GPT and the like
- Brainstorming methods
- Word Mix Chart
- Naming Conventions

EXPLORE : IDEATE

BRAINSTORMING SCHEDULE



Marathon, not a Sprint

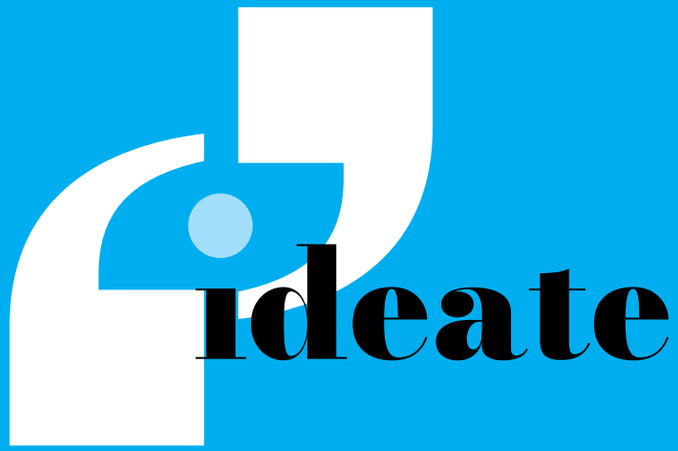
The average time spent in ideation and brainstorming is about two to four weeks. There is no predicting exactly how long or how many brainstorming sessions it will take to find a name that you fall in love with and meets all your objectives. How and when you meet is crucial to finding a name.

The cadence is imperative for a naming project. For some reason, your brain can only take so much time looking at words, generating words, and brainstorming name ideas before things start to look dyslexic.

Brainstorming Schedule: Meet for 20 to 40 minutes every other day. Do not skip more than two days in between meetings. This every-other-day 30-minute meeting schedule is the key. A certain amount of momentum is needed to keep going and keep the ideas flowing. Each meeting has one or two people firing on all cylinders and generating the majority of names for that session. Every member will not be a great producer at every meeting, which is okay. It is also okay if someone sits back and "just" listens to the others contribute. Hopefully, they will not be silent during every meeting. My experience is they aren't, and they are oftentimes the folks who, when they speak, have something profound to say to provide much-needed clarity for the whole group. Some people do better in the in-between days when they are alone and have quiet time.

On "Individual" work days, everyone can access the online shareable spreadsheet to write down the ideas that come to them in the off-moments. The person leading the group, preferably a brand professional, can also vet the ideas during those days. The vetting would consist of researching to see if the name is taken, trademarkable, or if any URLs are available.

WARNING: Do not let anyone fall in love with any name at these early stages. It usually takes three to four sessions before the group starts coming up with some great names that are still available.



Get Comfortable

This step in the process is where the rubber meets the road. Settle in and take your time. You will go through highs and lows, love and heartbreak, and often feel like you are going nowhere. Be patient and let your brain marinate on these naming ideas and pathways. You will find a name you can be passionate about; it just takes time.

Using LLMs or AI

The words you used to create your Brand Vocabulary List, Brand Attributes, and Company Vlaues are what you would want to give the AI name generators. Use AI sites as a tool to generate name ideas. You should ask the LLM or AI to generate a list of words that are associated with one of the words on your vocabulary list.

Prompts

Generate a business name that combines [ ] and [ ].

Suggest a business name that rhymes with 'bright.'

Create a business name with a play on words using 'peak'.

Suggest a business name that uses alliteration with 'P.'

Create a business name that reflects [your mission statement]

Create a business name that reflects [your vision statement]

Create a business name that reflects [your purpose statement]

Website Word Generation Tools

Do a search. New websites and LLM tools come out daily.

Canva
https://www.canva.com/business-name-generator/

Shopify
https://www.shopify.com/tools/business-name-generator

Namelix
https://namelix.com

Atom
https://www.atom.com/business-name-generator

BNG
https://businessnamegenerator.com

Name Snack
https://www.namesnack.com

Domain Name Search Tools

Name Mesh
https://namemesh.pro

Name Boy
https://www.nameboy.com

Shopify
https://www.shopify.com/tools/domain-name-generator

"Whack-on-the-side-of-the-Head" Questions

Q : Experience It: What does feel like to work or experience your product, service, or brand.

Q : Result: List what is achieved when you use your product, service, or brand.

Q : Values: List your personal or company values and any secondary supporting values.

Q : Anti: List the opposite and add "anti" prefix to make it the antithesis — what does it solve?

Q : Interviews: Schedule 15 to 20 minute interviews with customers.

Q : Geography: Are there any landmarks, locations, or regions that have positive associations to the positive attributes of your product, service, or brand?

Q : Word Mix: Play with prefixes, roots, and postfixes of words. Mix and match to see if any unique and fun is created. Reference the "Word Mix Chart."

Q : Naming Conventions: Does any of the naming conventions (page 60) spur any ideas?

Q : Languages: Are there any direct language translations that have the desired sound and feel?

Q : Etymology: What Latin roots, prefixes, suffixes, or history behind the word that pertains to your desired attributes?

Q : Stories: Are there related words or things connected to concepts, stories, fables, Greek mythology, etc.?

Q : Nouns: What other objects are like this?

Q : Adjectives: What words describe those products that we could modify and enhance?

Q : Superpower: If this new product delivered superpowers, what would they be?

Q : Dress to Impress: What words would describe this new product if you were trying to impress your someone important to you?

Q : Get Emotional: What words would add emotional impact to the product name?

Q : The How: What words describe "how" the product works when it is at its best?

Q : Reaction: What words would be more exciting, powerful, fun, surprising, or memorable?

Q : Senses: How would it taste, touch, smell, sound, feel?

WORD MIX CHART

Add your product or service (your what) in the center column to the chart below then add a prefix or suffix (or both) to the "root column" to create new words.

PREFIX	ROOT	SUFFIX
wiki	leaks	
TIME & ORDER	YOUR "WHAT"	NOUN SUFFIXES
pre		tion
post		sion
ante		ment
retro		ness
ex		ity
SIZE & QUANTITY		ship
micro		er/or
macro		ist
mega		ism
mini		ance/ence
maxi		ADJECTIVE SUFFIXES
POSITION & DIRECTION	home	ful/fully
sub		less
super		able/ible
inter		ous
trans		y
extra		ive
NEGATION		al
anti	stat	ic
non		VERB SUFFIXES
dis		ize/ise
de		ate
un	shop	ify
NUMBER		en
mono		ADVERB SUFFIXES
bi		ly
tri		ward/wards
quad		MISCELLANEOUS
multi		hood
STATUS OR QUALITY		dom
mal		th
bene		
auto		
dys		

NAMING CONVENTIONS

A

Abbreviation A shortened form of a written word or phrase.

Acronym A word formed from the initial letter or letters of a series of words in a phrase.

Agentive A noun denoting the agent or doer of an action, typically formed by adding the suffix -er to the verb in question.

Alliteration The repetition of the same consonant sounds or of different vowel sounds at the beginning of words or in stressed syllables.

Allusion A reference, explicit or implicit, to a culture's classical literature.

Alphanumeric A name consisting of some combination of letters and numbers.

Amalgam The blending of two or more meanings into one name.

Anachronism A name whose use is chronologically incongruous.

Analogy The process of creating or modifying a particular name on the basis of an existing name or pattern in the language.

Anaptyxis The insertion of a vowel or vowels to break up a troublesome consonant cluster.

Antonym A name meaning the opposite of another.

Aphesis The omission of the initial part of a common phrase.

Aptronym A name that fits a person's nature or occupation.

Arbitrary Name A name which bears no logical relationship to the company, product, service, or attribute it describes.

Archaism A name which is antiquated in style or meaning.

Associative Field A set of names connected in form, meaning, or both.

Attributive A noun which directly precedes the noun it modifies, without the necessity of a linking verb, e.g., MailChimp.

B

Back Formation The creation of a new word from an existing form assumed, incorrectly, to be its derivative.

Backronym [compound of back + acronym] A word re-interpreted as an acronym. In a backronym, an expansion is invented to treat an existing word as an acronym.

Baptism In commercial terms, the ceremony in which a name is bestowed upon a new company or product, generally in the form of an advertisement.

Blending The creation of a new word by combining the first part of one word with the last part of another.

Borrowing The adoption of a word from one language into the lexicon of another.

C

Cachet The prestigious associations one culture's language has for speakers of another language, e.g., Häagen-Daz.

Calque The literal translation of a word from one language into the lexicon of another.

Clutter The proliferation of indistinguishable names within a particular product category. The high-tech industry is sometimes considered cluttered with net names.

Coinage The deliberate or accidental creation of a new, artificial name, i.e., Kleenex.

Collocation The likelihood that a particular word will occur in the neighborhood of another word. This tendency can be exploited by commercial names. The words "spic & span" are an example of collocation. We also associate "baa" with sheep and "moo" with cow.

Colloquialism An informal word which is frowned upon in formal speech or writing. The word "ain't" is a colloquialism.

Connotation A word's extrinsic, figurative sense, including its overtones and shades of meaning.

Consonance The repetition of a consonant sound. Cracker Jack is the exemplar of consonance in advertising.

D

Denotation A word's intrinsic, literal sense, excluding its overtones and shades of meaning.

Descriptor A word which literally describes the product or service being identified, generally employed in conjunction with a fanciful, arbitrary, or suggestive name.

Diminutive Any suffix which denotes smallness, youth, familiarity, or affection, e.g., Huggies.

Discourse Audibility The likelihood that a given name will stand out in the course of normal speech. The discourse audibility of the name Yahoo! is high.

Dissonance A harsh or disagreeable combination of sounds. Some native English speakers consider various Southeast Asian languages to be dissonant, based on the unfamiliar tones and consonant combinations.

Doublet A pair of words which share a common origin, but which have distinct shades of meaning.

E

Engram The neural change hypothesized to account for the memorability of a name in the mind of a hearer, e.g., Amazon.com.

Epicene A noun whose single form can designate either a male or a female. The words author and poet are both examples.

Eponym A name derived from a person, without regard to whether he or she is fictitious, mysterious, or legendary, e.g., Aunt Jemima and Betty Crocker.

Euphemism An inoffensive substitute for a term considered offensive or inappropriate, e.g., Cottonelle UltraSoft Double Roll Bathroom Tissue for Toilet Paper.

Euphony A smooth, mellifluous sound effect, irrespective of meaning (cf. Dissonance), e.g., For English speakers, the name Charmin is pleasant to the ear, regardless of its meaning.

Exclamatory Sentence A complete exclamation designed to express an emotional reaction to the product. The advantage, and disadvantage, of this approach is that it fully states its message, leaving nothing to the imagination of the consumer, e.g., Gee, Your Hair Smells Terrific! shampoo and I Can't Believe It's Not Butter!

F

Fanciful Name A name invented without apparent reference to any other word in the lexicon. Kodak and Exxon are the archetypes of this category.

Formative An affix which unites a set of otherwise unrelated names. McDonald's McChicken and McNuggets are examples.

Formulaic Phrase A traditional turn of phrase, often dismissed as a cliché, but in origin a mnemonic device. The children's alphabet—a singsong chant of the letters of the alphabet—is an example of this.

Fused Compound A compound whose meaning in total is not predictable from the meanings of its individual components. The English word pumpkin does not mean "pump"and "family."

G

Genericide The process by which a trademark becomes synonymous with its associated product, to the point it may cease to be protectable. Although Xerox was once a brand of copy machines, it is now used to refer to any copied document, and the word's usage has extended to a verb form: to xerox something means to photocopy it.

Gerund In English, the verbal form ending in -ing, conveying the meaning of the verb but used as a noun, e.g., Martha Stewart Living.

H

Hieronym [Greek hieros, "holy" + onuma, "name"] A name derived from myth or religion. Examples include Saint Brendan's Superior irish cream liqueur, and Zeus salad dressing.

I

Iconicity The likelihood a name will be readily visualized by its intended audience. The name of the computer company Apple lends itself to easy iconicity.

Imperative Sentence A command which exhorts the consumer to action, e.g., "Skittles; Taste the Rainbow"

Interrogatory Sentence A complete question designed to involve the consumer with the product, e.g., Where In The World Is Carmen Sandiego?

Invented Spelling The practice of using non-standard spelling to achieve a desired effect or to otherwise distinguish a name, e.g., Cingular.

J

Jargon The specialized vocabulary or set of idioms shared by a particular profession. The various acronyms and idioms used by the US military forces would be considered jargon.

M

Metanalysis The consumer's interpretation or analysis of an unfamiliar name, the process of which may include folk etymology, analogy, etc. For example, many people associate the term Java with coffee, instead of the Indonesian island from which the coffee comes, and after which it is named.

Metaphor A figure of speech in which one object or concept is likened to another. For example, Fruit of the Loom is a metaphor for underwear.

Metaphrase The literal translation of a phrase from one language into another. Translating Spanish "mi casa su casa" into English "my house, your house" would be a metaphrase.

Metonymy The substitution of one word for another of similar meaning. Using the term Washington to refer to the US government is an example of metonymy.

Mimetic Word A word formed in imitation of another word, e.g., litterbug, on the analogy of jitterbug.

N

Neologism A newly and deliberately coined word. Cysive and Dreamery are neologisms.

Nexus The connection between the members of a semantic field. An example of nexus is the meaningful connection between the words kitten, cat, and feline.

Nickname The familiar form of a proper name. The wise company considers its products' likely nicknames, e.g., Bud for Budweiser, T-bird for Thunderbird

Noa Word A word free of any taboo in the languages under consideration, meaning that it may be employed without reservation in the creation of a commercial name (cf. Taboo Word).

Nomenclature A system of names, used in business or otherwise, serving to identify the individual elements within a family (of products, services, etc.), and how they relate to each other. General Mills, for example, has a line of cereals based on the names of monsters: Count Chocula, Frankenberry, Boo Berry, and the sadly departed Fruit Brute and Yummy Mummy.

Notional Word Something that exists only in theory, abstractly, or conceptually, e.g., Infinity, BrightScape

O

Onomastics The study of names and naming practices.

Onomatopoeia The creation of a name that sounds like what it refers to. The Rice Krispies' cartoon characters Snap, Crackle, and Pop are famous examples.

Oxymoron A figure of speech containing an apparent contradiction. Jumbo shrimp is an often-cited example.

P

Paronym A word formed from another word in a foreign language. Many fragrances take advantage of both the cachet of French and the fact that English and French share a considerable vocabulary. Trésor perfume, where trésor is the French source of the English word treasure, is a clear example of this strategy.

Pathetic Fallacy The attribution of human emotions to a product. Cheerios cereal is an example of pathetic fallacy.

Patois A regional dialect. Several dialects of American English could be considered examples; the distinctive New Orleans dialect is a patois.

Patronym A name derived from a paternal ancestor. Leif Ericson's surname, literally "Eric's son," is a patronym.

Pejoration A semantic shift which results in a less favorable connotation. For example, the word villain originally meant farm laborer, but now refers to an evil person or hardened criminal.

Personification A figure of speech in which a product is given human form (cf. Eponym). Mr. Clean is a perfect example. Nintendo Game Boy game system is another example.

Phoneme A meaningful sound, the smallest unit of speech which distinguishes one word from another in a given language. In the pair of words bat and mat, the distinguishing sounds "b" and "m" are both phonemes.

Phonestheme A consonant cluster apparently associated with a particular semantic field, but with no distinguishable independent meaning. Some English examples are gl-, sn-, and sl-.

Phonogram A character or symbol used in lieu of a word. The famous @ sign is a phonogram.

Polysemy The proliferation of words sharing a single, ancestral root. Examples include English variations of the Latin root procedere, "proceed," such as process, processional, proceeding, etc.

Portmanteau A whimsical blend, as exemplified in the works of Lewis Carroll (cf. Blend). Snapple iced tea is a good example of this practice commercially.

Proprietary Name A name capable of being owned and trademarked, as opposed to a descriptive name. Cysive is a strong example of a proprietary name.

R

Reduplication The repetition of syllables within a name, such as the initial two syllables of Boboli Italian bread crust.

Referent The object symbolized by a name. The referent of Sun Microsystems is, obviously, the sun.

Rhyme A mnemonic device in which two or more words correspond in sound.

Root The semantic kernel from which a set of words is derived by phonetic change and/or extension. For example, the root "child" has evolved into multiple variants such as child-like, childish, children.

S

Semantic Field A set of words connected in meaning (cf. Associative Field). The various terms used relating to movies (e.g., cinema, theater, film, reel, soundtrack, etc.) form a semantic field.

Semantic Fitness The degree to which a name is perceived to fit with the object it identifies. For example the kind of computer called a laptop does indeed fit on one's lap, hence the name conveys a high degree of semantic fitness.

Semantic Position The perceived position of a proposed name in a continuum of competing names. Some companies use semantic position as a criterion in selecting a new name. One does not want a name that sounds weaker or slower than the name of a competing product.

Semantics The study of meaning in language, including the relationship between language, thought, and behavior.

Simile A figure of speech in which an explicit comparison is made between two unlike objects via a construction such as like, as, than, similar to, resembles, etc.

Slang The nonstandard vocabulary of a given culture or subculture, typically consisting of transitory coinages and figures of speech. American usage of the term "phat" is an example of slang.

Slogan A catch phrase. Sun Microsystems' "We're the dot in .com" is a slogan.

Sociolinguistics The study of the sociological factors involved in the use of language, including gender, race, class, etc.

Sound Pattern The permissible combinations of phonemes in a given language. While "sl-" fits the English sound pattern and does not look unusual or pose pronunciation difficulties, "sb-" does not fit the English sound pattern and would therefore be considered foreign and/or difficult to pronounce.

Suggestive Name A name composed of morphemes which singly or together suggest or refer to the goods or services in question, but which do not actually describe them. Spalding Infusion (ball-pump technology) and BlueArc (high-speed data storage) are just two examples.

Synecdoche A figure of speech in which a part is used to represent the whole (cf. Metonymy). Staples, for example, sells a wide variety of office supplies.

Synonym A word having the same meaning as another. The word nice is synonymous with one usage of the word kind.

Synonymic Attraction The tendency for those subjects of great interest to the community to attract a large number of colorful synonyms. For example, consider the variety of terms we use for money, intoxication, and sex.

T

Taboo Word A word to be avoided because it is sacred, politically incorrect, vulgar, or otherwise inappropriate. Spanish Bimbo bread contains a sexual, therefore lowbrow, English reference which would not likely be associated with a staple food like bread.

Textual Visibility The likelihood that a given name will stand out within a block of text. Many factors can contribute to a word's textual visibility, such as its length, initial letter, and spelling.

Theronym A name derived from an animal, e.g., Ford Mustang, Cricket, and RedBull.

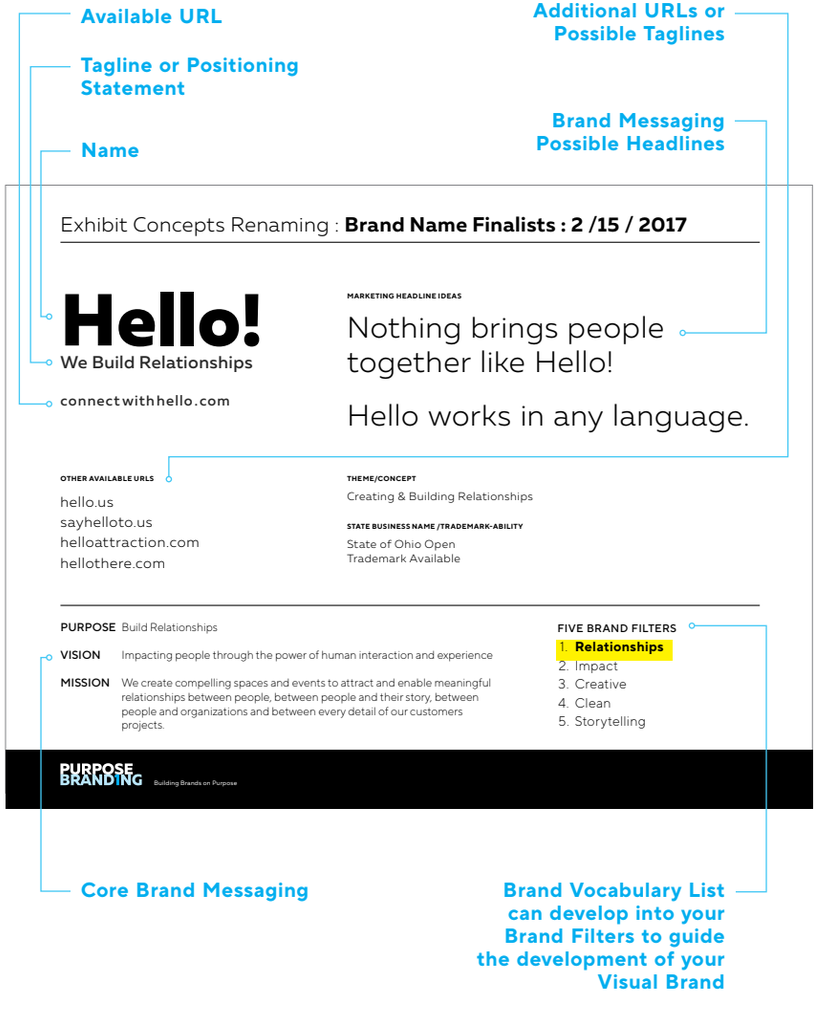
Toponym A name derived from a place or geographic feature. e.g. Shasta soft drinks, the Chevy Tahoe sports utility vehicle, and Farallon Timbuktu remote control software.

At-A-Glance

- Name Presentation Sheet
- Filter as you go
- Filtering spreadsheet
- Questions to consider

FILTER : FOCUS

THE ANATOMY OF A NAME PRESENTATION SHEET



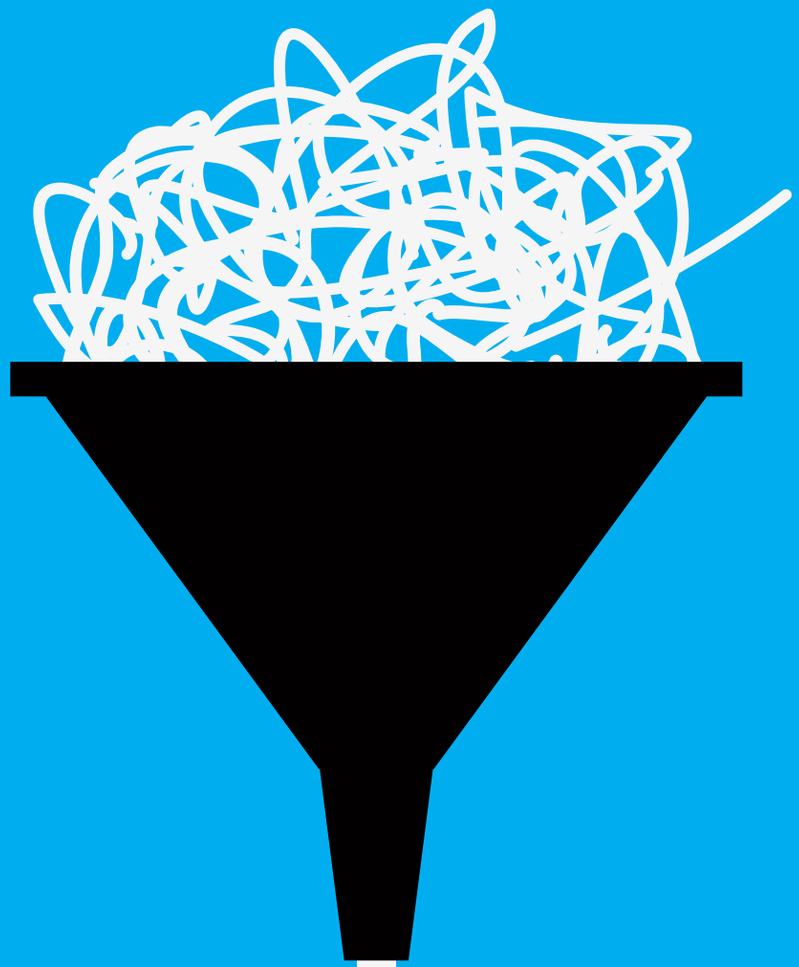
Filter as You Go

As mentioned in the previous step, while brainstorming, you filter and focus between sessions. Filtering out names taken by competitors or those that can't be Trademarked. Fill in the spreadsheet's cell with red (like the spreadsheet sample on page 45) if that is the case. If you don't, you will forget a week from now if that is a direction or name you should avoid.

The focusing aspect is where you are listening to the team's thoughts on concepts, subjects, or personality. If they repeatedly suggest words associated with a particular topic — like for the Children's Museum bringing up the word "play" — then that is a part of the culture that is very important to them. It is a part of their ethos. It is essential to have a name that represents or is associated with the concept of play.

"Inspiring play" or "learning through hands-on experimentation" may be their purpose. It is why they do what they do. When the identity and purpose are congruent, it is easier for the mind to remember and build a connection with that organization, product, or company. That's naming on purpose.

If any names have promise (you think that name has any visual or verbal branding legs), fill the spreadsheet's cell with green (see spreadsheet example on page 45). If there may be some issues or have negative connotations.



FOCUS

Some words or names have a natural ability to be implemented with messaging and visuals, which may help decide which name to choose. If your brand professional does not have experience in design, messaging, and marketing, then find someone who does and allows them to be a part of the process.

A great name that is hard to represent visually will not be a good long-term choice. I have seen companies pay a lot of money for a name that can not be Trademarked or has very little to work with, both verbally and visually. That is mainly because the naming agency is proficient in verbal communication but not strong in implementation, branding, visuals, or marketing. They consist of people with strong language skills but not in anything beyond that. I've talked to several trademark attorneys who have told stories of their clients going to a high-profile ad agency and spending $100K on a name that couldn't be trademarked. They wasted money and time.

Questions to consider:

Q : Are there any concepts that are stronger than the others?

Q : Is the group gravitating to a specific word on the vocabulary list?

Q : Are two or three names out of each vocabulary list heading that stand out as the best?

Q : Are there any that have unintended bad connotations and should be discarded?

FILTER

At-A-Glance

- Balanced communication
- Evaluation Chart
- Descriptions of criteria

EVALUATE : SELECT

Example : A Children's Museum

PURPOSE : Encourage learning through discovery

ARCHETYPE : The Creator

VOCABULARY LIST :
Engage, Create, Explore, Discover, & Imagine

NAME :
Atlanta Children's Museum
Their name is straightforward. Says what it is.

TAGLINE :
The tagline can be more expressive
Example: "Learning like Bam!"

SUPPORTING VISUALS :
The graphics and illustrations can be active.
Comic Book Action Hero Style

Example : A Conference Planning Company

PURPOSE : Bring people together

ARCHETYPE : The Matchmaker

VOCABULARY LIST :
Connection, Relationships, Information, Network, & Grow

NAME :
Hello
Their name is open-ended but fits their purpose, vision, and mission in a clever way.

TAGLINE :
The tagline can be more informative
Example: "All great relationships start with 'Hello.'"

SUPPORTING VISUALS :
The graphics and illustrations can represent a blending. Using overlapping shapes, the two colors blend where they overlap.

Use the Evaluation Chart (page 77) with your team to rate each name (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest) across all 11 criteria. Once they are totaled, you should see a clear separation between good and bad names. Depending on your industry and brand messaging, one or two of these categories may carry a higher weight than others which can tip the scales to provide a clear winner.

Balanced Communication

Throughout a naming project, if the comment arises "That name doesn't speak to our _____ capability." Oftentimes, the client will want a name that says everything about what they do, why they do it, and how they are different. A single name can not do all that. The business leader must choose the most important idea the company needs to stand for. Once the name has been chosen, you can use the tagline, messaging, and visual identity elements to balance your message and tell more of your story.

CHART LEGEND

Appearance : How does the word look? Depending on upper and lowercase, ALL UPPER CASE, or a mix, each word has a look that needs to be considered.

Distinctive : Is the name different or does it sound like another word?

Depth : Does the name lend itself to telling your story? Will it be easy to implement the brand messaging and visual identity?

Energy : Does the word have an energy when it is spoken?

Humanity : Does the name have a sense of caring or softness that is needed for your customers?

Positioning : Does the name help claim a position in the marketplace?

Sound : How does the name sound when spoken?

X-Factor : Is it edgy or cool and fits your company's culture?

Trademark : How crowded is the industry or business space? How many other similar trademarks have similar names?

URL : Are there web addresses available? (Social: Instagram handle)

Tagline-ability : How well does the name lend itself to creating a supporting tagline that reinforces your brand messaging and positioning?

NAME EVALUATION CHART

Names	Appearance	Distinctive	Depth	Energy	Humanity	Positioning	Sound	X Factor (cool sounding)	Trademark	URL	Tagline-ability	TOTAL

At-A-Glance

- A Story of Hope & Change
- Brand universe
- Golden State Network : BrightScape
- Startup : Revive Bodyworks
- Donet : DataYard
- Startup : Able Stays
- Goldmeier Consulting : Cambia Factor
- Startup : RIZER Athletics
- Caspedia : Panstoria

REVEAL : EXAMPLES

A Story of Hope & Change

Purpose of Renaming

The purpose of renaming should address this question: "What is our number one business problem?" To answer this question honestly, the existing business name must be considered as possibly contributing to the problem. The CEO needs to realize that the company is losing business because of the misunderstanding—or at least the name and identity are making it difficult. Renaming is not something you can talk someone into. It needs to be a process of realizing that the existing name is often the root of the problem.

For the most part, the industry understood The Other Place worked with the local homeless population. However, we discovered the general public had preconceived negative ideas about homeless organizations. The Other Place realized there was a problem and was open to the idea of a name change before they came to us.

Donet (page 98) arrived at that conclusion during the Discovery Process. Even though those were two very different initial engagements, they both were very apprehensive walking into the unknown. As a naming professional, you must be aware of how emotional a name change can be to the client. Dave Mezera, the CEO of Donet, declared, "It is like we are considering renaming my sixteen-year-old son."

the other place

≠

PURPOSE
End homelessness

VISION
In our community, no one should be homeless.

MISSION
Transition people from homeless to homes in 90 days through housing, services, advocacy, & education.

BRAND ATTRIBUTES
- Pro Humanity
- Warm & Friendly
- Anti-Homeless
- Mentor
- Caregiver

Achieving Brand Congruency

$$\text{Brand} \cong \left\{ \frac{\text{VALUES \& ATTRIBUTES}}{\text{PURPOSE + MISSION + VISION}} \right\}$$

Brand Congruency

The most effective brands do the best job representing who they are through their verbal or visual communication — starting with their name. They are authentic, accurate and genuine allowing them to attract the right people (both employees and customers) for the right reasons.

Brand Discovery

Most branding agencies go through their own process to define the objectives of a rebrand. Going one step further by defining the purpose of the business was a way to separate the client from the process emotionally. I use the purpose statement as the measuring stick to determine if we are close to the target rather than anyone's personal preferences. Working through some brand exercises with the CEO and business leaders allows everyone to get on the same page. Based on the group's input, rewrite all the core business messaging before we start: Purpose, Vision, Mission, Values, and Brand Attributes.

The two major objectives of rebranding and renaming

The Other Place were determined:

1. The public perceived homeless services as institutional
2. It took way too long to explain who they were

They were anything but cold and institutional. The Other Place was created to fill the gap between the two standard-bearers of local homeless services. They were the place, the other place, that provided what the other two couldn't.

It made sense to those in the local industry — the other two organizations referred people to them. However, the CEO found the name created confusion and took too much time to explain when meeting with new potential financial supporters. The name sounded similar to the famous "Who's on Third" comedy skit.

E.G.

Can Two Walk Together Unless They Agree?

Even when a client is committed and knows they need a new name, there's a bit of apprehensiveness until they find the right one, but that is normal. One thing is sure; renaming is not something you can "sell" or try to convince a client they need. They must see their name as a part of the problem and be committed to the process. The Other Place knew their existing name was not helping when asking for support. Their name was not congruent with who they were, and why potential donors should care they existed.

A Hopeful Change

During the research phase, the word "hope" was used in almost 100% of the past clients' stories. The Other Place provided hope and delivered a home when they thought all was hopeless. The organization gave them hope. This is something every person can get excited about, especially financial supporters.

The new name, "Homefull" had the immediate recognition of two words, "home" and "full as in 'overflowing'," and was linguistically close to the word "hopefully." It provided all the positive semantic meanings they sought: hopeful, home, and helpful. It tackled issues they had regarding the public perception of being an institution. It solved their number one business problem.

Common Misconceptions about Renaming

WE WANT IT ALL

Remember two things: one, a single name will never communicate everything you want about your product or business, and two, the name doesn't exist in a vacuum. A tagline, photos, and headlines will eventually surround the name.

WALK TOGETHER

You can't push or drag a CEO across the finish line. The naming professional and the CEO (and the business leaders) must walk together through the process—the naming professional leads. The CEO must be the brand champion. They need to be proud of the new name. Being able to say the new name with confidence is essential.

CIRCLE BACK

Do not discount any name ideas unless a competitor is already using them. Keep all ideas written down because you can combine words into an invented word later like Home + Hopeful being combined to create Homefull. Often times what seems to be common words you won't use come back into play later.

We are Homefull. Are you?

Home + Hopeful combined to be Homefull. Each word was relatively common and unexciting on its own. Once combined, it became a new word you intrinsically understood and conveyed exactly what the client needed to communicate.

Homefull's Tagline

Homefull's tagline was a recrafted version of their original vision statement, which was already strong and inspiring: End homelessness by providing housing, services, advocacy, and education. Combining the somewhat esoteric invented word "homefull" with a straightforward yet future-aspirational tagline "Until there is no homelessness" communicated to financial supporters something they could get excited about supporting.

THE NAME TAGLINE BALANCE

The rounded, soft, organic style of the hand-written font visually represents personality, friendliness, and individuality. Full with two l's, further extends the implication of "full" rather than empty or opposite of "less"of life.

The gesture illustration of a house implies friendliness, and approachability.

The color gold implies the hope of a new day, sunrise, warmth, and bright future.

Homefull

I am strong.
I am hard working.
I am Homefull.

Homefull Messaging

"We are Homefull" became the messaging for the unveiling press conference. It encapsulated the spirit and desire for the new brand. It was so well received, the alumni who were once ashamed of their past were now happy to share their experience in public, and later wearing t-shirts, and volunteering.

Homefull Design

The hand-written typography's rounded, soft, organic style visually represents personality, friendliness, and individuality. An image of a house drawn in a loose, gesture illustration style implies quaintness, friendliness, and approachability. It visualizes the goal or mission: To move from homelessness to a house in 90 days. The gold color implies the hope of a new day, sunrise, warmth, and a bright future. The warm brown mimicked land that they would someday own for themselves.

Homefull's Website

Today's primary marketing tool is the website. With Homefull, like any new name and brand, the photos, headlines, and illustrations supported the name because the name can't do it all. Every verbal and visual element helps tell the story and should support the business or organization's vision, mission, and purpose.

The entire process was eye opening. From our name 'Homefull' to the visual identity, everything now reinforces who we really are.

Tina Patterson
Executive Director, Homefull

The Payoff: The First 2-minute Donor Meeting

Armed with one sheet of paper, Tina Patterson had her first meeting with a large tri-state big box retailer. She laid down her simple, one-sided color copy, 8.5 by 11-inch fundraising sheet on his desk comprising the New Homefull Logo, Vision Statement, and Mission Statement with four "Giving Amount Categories."

He said, "I'll do this one," pointing to one of the Giving Options before she could get her new-printed business card out of her purse. She didn't have time to introduce herself or give Homefull's elevator speech, let alone present the verbal sales pitch for the new fundraising campaign. She questioned, "This one what? For how many households?" He responded, "This one," pointing to the "Supply Strart-up Kit" and saying, "For all 250 families!" Signing the campaign sheet and saying, "Take this to my assistant, and she'll get you taken care of," while shaking Tina's hand. Tina called me from the car. "It works! It works!"

THE OTHER PLACE : A COMMUNITY HOMELESS SERVICE

BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

We are perceived as institutional.

Our community doesn't understand what we do.

We are warm and friendly and our brand needs to reflect that.

CORE MESSAGING

PURPOSE: End homelessness.

VISION: In our community, no one should be homeless.

MISSION: End homelessness by providing housing, services, advocacy, and education.

POSITIVE ASSOCIATION VOCABULARY LIST & BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

Hope	Restart	Home	Community	
life	second wind	homestead	family	
freedom	restore	change	humanity	
stability	anew	transformation	circle	
self-sufficiency	genesis	opportunity	group	
stability	ReGen		clan	
hope	fulcrum		sharing	
opportunity	renewal			

FIRST ROUND PICKS

Restore **Renaissance** **Homestead** **Second Wind**

FINALISTS

Anew
Until There's No Homelessness

Homefull
Prevention. Education. Transition

EXISTING NAME

the other place

NEW NAME

Homefull

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- ☑ Trademark Open
- ☑ www.homefull.com
- ☑ State Business Name

BRAND COLOR PALETTE

- Pantone 143
- Pantone 405
- Pantone 370

BRAND DIRECTION : DESIGN DIRECTION

BRAND FILTERS

Hopeful
Friendly
Human
Home
Personal

EXAMPLE 1

GOLDEN STATE NETWORK : A FIBER OPTIC INFRASTRUCTURE COMPANY

BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

We don't want to sound like a government department.

We started in the Golden State (CA) but now work in all 50.

Bring opportunity to communities through high speed Internet connection.

CORE MESSAGING

PURPOSE: Connecting communities.

VISION: Connect all communities to a world of opportunity.

MISSION: Design, build, and operate open-access broadband networks for under-served communities.

POSITIVE ASSOCIATION VOCABULARY LIST & BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

opportunity	community	fiber optic	open access	smart Internet
freedom	one	fast	one	one
access	together	light speed	OAsis	bright
options	alliance	broadband	engage	smart
ability	group	lumen	open	nimble
rise up	village	blaze	one	
growth	town	axon		
	city	velocity		
	civitas			
	coalition			
	landscape			

FIRST ROUND PICKS

Bright Fiber One OA Sharp Fiber Communitas

FINALISTS

One OA
Open Access Networks

BrightScape
Connecting Communities

EXISTING NAME

GOLDENSTATENET

NEW NAME

BrightScape

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- ☑ Trademark Open
- ☑ brightscapenetworks.org
- ☑ State Business Name

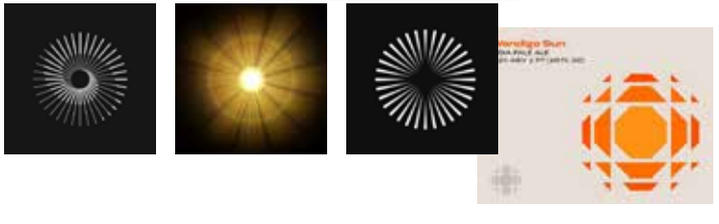
BRAND COLOR PALETTE

- Pantone Violet
- Pantone 280
- Pantone 3115

BRAND DIRECTION : EXISTING DESIGN INSPIRATION

BRAND FILTERS

Brightness
Community
Vibrant & Bold
Innovative
Modern



EXAMPLE 2

STARTUP : A NEUROMUSCULAR THERAPY PRACTICE

BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

We are NOT a massage salon.

Need to comply "clinical" but not an "institutional" and feel "cold."

Patients move throughout the session and are given homework of stretches and yoga exercises to facilitate recovery.

CORE MESSAGING

PURPOSE: Provide freedom of motion and action.

VISION: Helping people remain active and free of pain.

MISSION: Removing body pain through neuromuscular and neuro-kinetic therapies which includes deep tissue massage, fascia release, and acupressure techniques.

POSITIVE ASSOCIATION VOCABULARY LIST & BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

massage	recovery	active	movement	medical
body	recovery	movement	sports	therapy
soma	no pain	workout	range of motion	clinical
muscle	movement	powerful	release	restorative
fascia	freedom	mobile	freedom	healing
stretch	relief	working	active	
	revive	tireless	working	
	light			

FIRST ROUND PICKS

SomaMatics

Body Revival

Range of Motion

FINALISTS

Bodyworks
Tagline

REVIVE
Relieving pain

EXISTING NAME

Startup with no name

NEW NAME

REVIVE
BODYWORKS

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

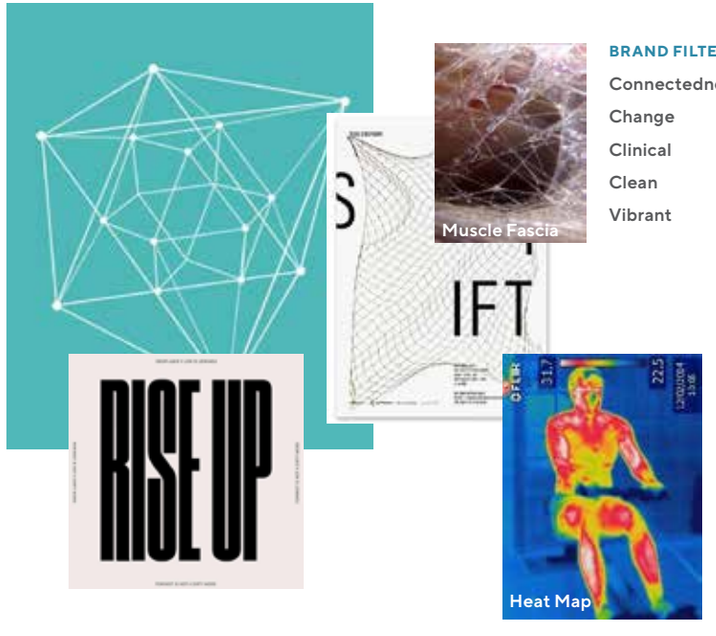
- ☑ Trademark Open
- ☑ www.revive-bodyworks.com
- ☑ State Business Name

BRAND COLOR PALETTE

Pantone Blue

Pantone Purple

BRAND DIRECTION : EXISTING DESIGN INSPIRATION



BRAND FILTERS

Connectedness
Change
Clinical
Clean
Vibrant

EXAMPLE 3

DONET : A DIAL-UP COMPANY BECAME A CLOUD SERVICE PROVIDER

BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

Donet name was different but not good.

Name is mispronounced as Doo-net, Doe-ney & Dough-net.

Name, "Dayton Ohio Network," doesn't align with their new strategic direction or the type of clients they are trying to attract.

CORE MESSAGING

PURPOSE: Keep the business world moving.

VISION: Be the leading cloud services partner for mission critical applications.

MISSION: Provide the most reliable data, internet access, hosting, co-location services, and mission critical applications in the Midwest.

POSITIVE ASSOCIATION VOCABULARY LIST & BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

Trust	Protected	Custom	Human	
VastSilo	Reliable	Tailored	Interface	
DataIsle	Data Rock	Fit	Connexion	
Red Iron Crow	Petros	Skybuilt	Dialogue	
DataYard	Fortisky	TopShelf	Touchpoint	
DataBasis	Fort Sky	Bluesky	Persona	
Silverlining	StrataSilo		InterAction	
SkyBolt	Siros			
	StrataCast			
	Stratanchor			
	DataCylo			

FIRST ROUND PICKS

BlueSky **Interface** **Skybuilt** **Stratanchor**

FINALISTS

TopShelf
Premium Cloud Services

DataYard
Where Business Data Works

EXISTING NAME

donet

NEW NAME

DATA YARD

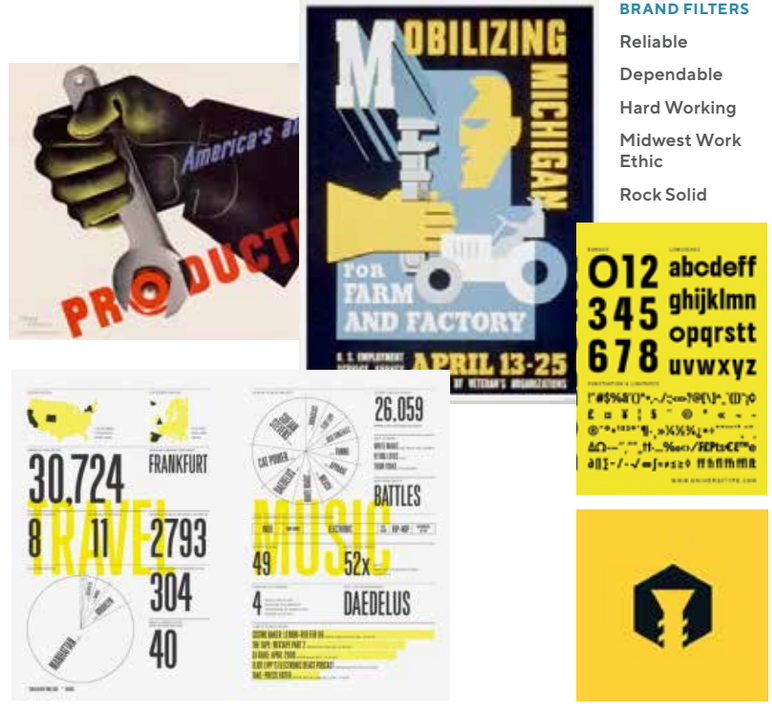
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- ☑ Trademark Open
- ☑ www.datayardworks.com
- ☑ State Business Name

BRAND COLOR PALETTE

- Pantone 130
- Black
- 50% Screen Black

BRAND DIRECTION : EXISTING DESIGN INSPIRATION



BRAND FILTERS

- Reliable
- Dependable
- Hard Working
- Midwest Work Ethic
- Rock Solid

EXAMPLE 4

STARTUP : FULLY ACCESSIBLE CABIN GET-A-WAYS

BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

New concept that is not known.

How will we be different than an ADA Hotel.

Getting the right people on the bus to get this idea off the ground.

CORE MESSAGING

PURPOSE: Making the unavailable available.

VISION: Providing nature stays for elderly and disabled so that they too can enjoy the tranquility available to the fully mobile.

MISSION: We provide those that are physically disabled fully accessible rental remote cabins, accessible trails, and facilitate community.

POSITIVE ASSOCIATION VOCABULARY LIST & BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

Cabin	Stay	Access	Nature	Community
house	home	freedom	wilderness	family
cottage	relax	entree	eco	sharing
nest	rest	open	flora	commune
log cabin	unorthodox	free	landscape	environment
lodge	radical	movement	leaf	parks
shelter	lodge	**ablity**	green	
			outdoors	
			wild	
			creation	

FIRST ROUND PICKS

Cabinable **Access Stays** **Nature Stays** **Able Stays**

FINALISTS

Nature Stays
Making the Unavailable Available

Able Stays
Making the Unavailable Available

E.G.

EXISTING NAME

Startup with
No Name

NEW NAME

able stays®

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- ☑ Trademark Open
- ☑ www.ablestays.com
- ☑ State Business Name

BRAND COLOR PALETTE

- Pantone 5753
- Black

BRAND DIRECTION : EXISTING DESIGN INSPIRATION

BRAND FILTERS

Luxury
Nature
Humanity
Natural
Sophisticated

REVEAL

EXAMPLE 5

GOLDMEIER CONSULTING : DATA ANALYTICS & PREDICTIVE MODELING CONSULTING COMPANY

BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

Release the brand from his last name.

Communicate his personality.

Provide the benefit he brings by challenging the status quo.

CORE MESSAGING

PURPOSE: Change the way you think about your data.

VISION: Using data to see the future of business.

MISSION: Design, develop and build data business tools that educate and train your company's internal resources.

POSITIVE ASSOCIATION VOCABULARY LIST & BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

Change	Challenger	Reformer	Data	Improvement
truth	rebel	force	math	enlightenment
repent	reform	change	factors	uncover
alchemy	force	revolutionary	projective	reveal
razor	unorthodox	new	evidential	diagnose
sharp facts	radical	fresh	evidence	forward
incite		novel	fulcrum	strive
Incite Data			factus	transformation
cambia			solve factors	diagnose
cambia factor			solve point	
cambia force				

FIRST ROUND PICKS

Sofos **Solve Factors** **Revealed Path** **Cambia Force**

FINALISTS

Solve Factors
We're the difference

Cambia Factor
Change the way you think about your data

EXISTING NAME

Goldmeier
Consulting

NEW NAME

CAMBIA FACTOR

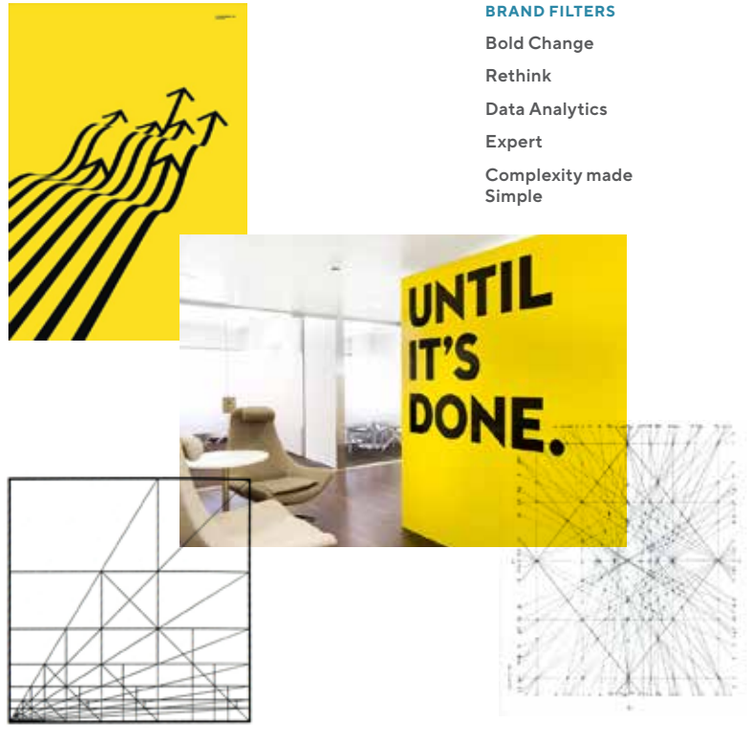
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- ☑ Trademark Open
- ☑ www.cambiafactor.com
- ☑ State Business Name

BRAND COLOR PALETTE

- Pantone Yellow
- Black
- 50% Screen Black

BRAND DIRECTION : EXISTING DESIGN INSPIRATION



BRAND FILTERS

Bold Change

Rethink

Data Analytics

Expert

Complexity made Simple

EXAMPLE 6

PURE HITTING : ATHLETIC TRAINING COMPANY

BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

Expand from hitting coach to athletic training.

Create a brand that was attractive to funding.

Brand needs to appeal to young audience.

CORE MESSAGING

PURPOSE: Elevating the game of young athletes.

VISION: Every potential realized.

MISSION: The best in the business training good young athletes to be great through private instruction, clinics, and camps.

POSITIVE ASSOCIATION VOCABULARY LIST & BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

Effort	Elevating	Training	Sports	Athletes
pure	epic	growth	competition	warrior
potential	rising	drill	fun	jock
achieve	best	train	games	contender
push	excel	coach	exercise	sportsman
endeavor	excellerate	practice	activity	sportswoman
energy	zone	push		player
force				

FIRST ROUND PICKS

Pure Player **Epic Athlete** **Spri Sports** **Tactic Training** **Rizer Athletics**

FINALISTS

Epic Athletes
Beyond Better

Rizer Athletics
Raising Your Game

EXISTING NAME

Pure Hitting

NEW NAME

RIZER ATHLETICS

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- ☑ Trademark Open
- ☑ www.rizerathletics.com
- ☑ State Business Name

BRAND COLOR PALETTE

- Pantone 804
- Black
- 60% Screen Black

BRAND DIRECTION : EXISTING DESIGN INSPIRATION

BRAND FILTERS

Active
Energy
Elevate
Limitless
Growth

EXAMPLE 7

CASPEDIA : SCRAPBOOK SOFTWARE COMPANY

BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

We started out as an App to organize your photos to a software company that has a suite of tools to capture, organize, and document the family story.

We need a new parent company that reflects what we have become as well as a naming convention for each piece of software in the suite.

CORE MESSAGING

PURPOSE: Storytelling.

VISION: Helping people capture, organize and document their family history.

MISSION: Be the number one comprehensive, self-guiding family storytelling software in the world.

POSITIVE ASSOCIATION VOCABULARY LIST & BRAINSTORMING IDEAS

Story	Photo	History	Collection	Family
history	image	heritage	album	heritage
tales	pix	legend	memoir	portrait
narrative	resolution	saga	archive	icon
chronicle	picture	chronicle	account	genealogy
epic	portrait	tradition	catalog	offspring
adventure	reflection	retrospect	anthology	clan
parable	vision	lore	catalog	household
report	snapshot	timeline	series	linage
myth	impression	background	ensemble	clan
plot	scene	annals	bundle	tribe

FIRST ROUND PICKS

Parent Company	**Mosaic**	**Heirloom**
Tagline	Designing Life Stories	Your Stories. Your Collection
Photo Software	Canvas	Album Press
Story Software	Chapters	Storyline

EXISTING NAME

CASPEDIA
Software for digital imaging

NEW NAME

panstoria
tell yours.

historian
by panstoria

artisan
by panstoria

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- ☑ Trademark Open
- ☑ www.panstoria.com
- ☑ State Business Name

BRAND DIRECTION : DESIGN DIRECTION

BRAND FILTERS

Capture Story
Organize
Save memories
Family

Purpose Naming Process: How to Name a Product, Business, or Brand that is Future-Proof

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PURPOSE BRANDING

www.brandsonpurpose.com

PURPOSE NAMING PROCESS
HOW TO NAME A PRODUCT, BUSINESS, OR BRAND THAT IS FUTURE-PROOF

This book is a real honest-to-God "How to" on the naming process. It goes into detail on the most neglected part of the process, brainstorming. The book provides guidance into how to implement AI and LLM model tools more effectively — giving you direction on input so you get great output. A chapter is devoted to creating and use a "Common Guidepost" to collaborate with your team throughout the process and provide a way to future proof your brand so you don't need to tackle this again. This book provides hardcore methodology — Not a list of requirements that you need a name that is cool, trendy, or different for difference's sake. You already know you need a great name, you need to know how to find it.

More info at www.namingonpurpose.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jän was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio and studied Industrial Design at The Ohio State University. After 30 years of being a designer, inventor, and entrepreneur, he now runs his branding consultancy called Purpose Branding. His purpose is to help small, privately-held business owners clarify and align their purpose—both verbally and visually—allowing his clients to attract the right people for the right reasons.

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