

Building the Perfect Beast

The Igor Naming Guide

Everything you've always wanted to know about naming companies, products and services. Compiled from the Igor website into one handy guide.

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This document will be updated regularly with new content. Please check the Naming Guide Download Page of the Igor website for the latest version:

<http://www.igorinternational.com/naming-guide.html>

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I. Overview

The best product & company names require the least advertising. They are advertisements.

Great names are a powerful force in the branding, marketing and advertising campaigns of the companies they work for. They differentiate you from competitors, make an emotional connection with your audience, and help to build a brand that ignites the passions of your customers.

At Igor, we believe that a powerful name is the result of a powerful positioning strategy. The key is to find a fresh way into the hearts and minds of your customers, redefine and own the conversation in your industry, and engage people on as many levels as possible. The best product and company names represent the ultimate process of boiling these ideas down into a word or two.

Creating Great Product and Company Names

Successful product and company names may appear to have been created by magic, but it is possible to develop names that are dynamic, effective and fully leverage a brand's potential if you have the right process in place. A process that is clear, insightful, logical and focused will lead to a name and tagline that are powerful components of your brand strategy, and pave the way for buy-in throughout your organization.

Before you begin, it is essential to decide what you want your new product or company name to do for you. To make that decision, you need to understand the possibilities. A name can:

- Achieve separation from your competitors
- Demonstrate to the world that you are different
- Reinforce a unique positioning platform
- Create positive and lasting engagement with your audience
- Be unforgettable
- Propel itself through the world on its own, becoming a no-cost, self-sustaining PR vehicle
- Provide a deep well of marketing and advertising images
- Be the genesis of a brand that rises above the goods and services you provide
- Completely dominate a category

Every naming project is unique and our process is customized for each of them. We make sure that all aspects of a work plan are designed to complement your naming project, corporate culture, approval process and timeframe.

As with any plan, it's all about inspired execution.

While we hold fast to the belief that every one of the six steps outlined in our process, from an initial competitive analysis to final product or company names and taglines, is vital to all naming projects, we understand that your marketing people may well have worked through some of them before contacting us. Consequently, our process is flexible enough to be tailored to the specific needs of your company.

Whether we are developing product or company names, the six steps outlined below are what gives us the ability to create powerful and lasting *brands*:

1. Competitive Analysis – Our process begins with a thorough competitive analysis, in which we quantify the tone and strength of competitive company names or product names. Creating such a document helps your naming team decide where they need to go with the positioning, branding and naming of your company or product.

2. Positioning – The next step is to help you refine and define your brand positioning. The more specific and nuanced your positioning is, the more effective the name will be. All great product and company names work in concert with the positioning of the businesses they speak for.

3. Name/Brand Development – Product or company name development begins by applying the positioning strategy to figure out what you want your new name to do for your marketing, branding and advertising efforts.

4. Trademark – We prescreen names under development through our trademark attorney to determine the likelihood that your company will be able to procure the names. We do this in order to feel confident that the names your attorney submits for final trademark screening and application have been deemed by an attorney as likely to pass muster for registration. If not, valuable time is lost.

5. Creative/Testing – A standard part of our naming process is the production of creative support materials to flesh-out potential names, and market research testing when appropriate. These may include stories, ad treatments, or graphic layouts featuring leading name candidates.

6. Name and Tagline – Final names and taglines, along with a well-defined positioning strategy, are the outcome of our process.

II. The Six Steps of the Igor Process

To ensure that the name you choose is as dynamic, effective and fully leveraged as possible, you need to have the right process in place. A process that is clear, insightful, logical and focused will lead to a name and tagline that are powerful components of your brand strategy, and pave the way for buy-in throughout your organization.

STEP 1: Competitive Analysis

A competitive analysis is an essential first step of any naming process. How are your competitors positioning themselves? What types of names are common among them? Are their names projecting a similar attitude? Do their similarities offer you a huge opportunity to stand out from the crowd? How does your business or product differ from the competition? How can a name help you define or redefine your brand? Can you change and own the conversation in your industry? Should you?

Quantifying the tone and strength of competitive company names or product names is an empowering foundation for any naming project. Creating such a document helps your naming team decide where they need to go with the positioning, branding and naming of your company or product. It also keeps the naming process focused on creating a name that is a powerful marketing asset, one that works overtime for your brand and against your competitors.

We display the results of a given sector of names in the form of taxonomy charts (see below).

STEP 2: Positioning

Our next step is to help you refine and define your brand positioning. The more specific and nuanced your positioning is, the more effective the name will be. All great names work in concert with the positioning of the business or product they speak for. The best positioning finds a way to reinvigorate or change the conversation that an industry has been having with its consumers.

Our positioning process is predicated on understanding everything about your brand, where it's been and where it's headed. The resulting naming process is based on a forward-looking positioning strategy that takes into account your brand, your competition, and your entire sector.

While it's important to understand what competitors are doing in order to act in a distinctive and powerful way, it's also useful to learn from their mistakes and successes.

For instance, the company that became Apple needed to distance itself from the cold, unapproachable, complicated imagery created by the other computer companies at the time that had names like IBM, NEC, DEC, ADPAC, Cincom, Dylakor, Input, Integral Systems, Sperry Rand, SAP, PSDI, Syncsort, and Tesseract.

The new company needed to reverse the entrenched view of computers in order to get people to use them at home. They were looking for a name that was unlike the names of traditional computer companies, a name that also supported a brand positioning strategy that was to be perceived as *simple, warm, human, approachable* and *different*.

Of course, once they had a clear positioning platform in place, there were still hundreds of potential names for the new company to consider. The process for finding that one perfect name is detailed in the next section.

STEP 3: Name / Brand Development

The first step in name development is deciding what you want your new name to do for your marketing, branding and advertising efforts. Making this decision allows you to narrow your name search to a certain category of name.

The relative strengths and weakness of the four major categories of names are discussed in this section:

1. Functional / Descriptive Product & Company Names

When descriptive names work: When a company names products and their brand strategy is to direct the bulk of brand equity to the company name. Examples of companies that follow this name strategy are BMW, Martha Stewart and Subway.

When descriptive names don't work: When they are company names. Company names that are descriptive are asked to perform only one task: explaining to the world the business that you are in. This is an unnecessary and counterproductive choice.

The downside here is many-fold. This naming strategy creates a situation that needlessly taxes a marketing and advertising budget because descriptive company names are drawn from a small pool of relevant keywords, causing them to blend together and fade into the background, indistinguishable from the bulk of their competitors - the antithesis of marketing.

As an example of the "brand fade out" caused by choosing descriptive company names, consider the names of the following branding and naming companies:

Brand/Branding Companies	Name/Naming Companies
Brand-DNA (.com)	ABC Name Bank
Brand-DNA (.net)	Brighter Naming
Brand A	Moore Names
Brand 2.0	Name Development
Brand Design	Name Evolution
Brand Doctors	Name Generator
Brand Evolve	Name-It
Brand Evolution	Name Lab
Brand Forward	Name One
Brand Juice	Name Pharm
Brand Ladder	Name Quest
Brand Link	Name Razor
Brand Maverick	Name Sale
Brand Mechanics	Name Sharks
Brand Meta	Name-Shop
Brand People	Name Stormers
Brand Positioning	Name Tag
Brand Salt	Name Trade
Brand Scope	Name Works
Brand Sequence	Name Works
Brand Slinger	Namebase
Brand Solutions	Naming
Brand Vista	Naming Systems
Independent Branding	Naming Workshop
Not Just Any Branding	Namington
The Better Branding Company	Strategic Name Development
The Brand Company	The Naming Company
The Brand Consultancy	Wise Name

These kinds of company names are easily avoided if a thorough **competitive analysis** is performed and if the people doing the naming understand the following basic concept:

The notion of describing a business in the name assumes that company names will exist at some point without contextual support, which is impossible. Company names will appear on websites, store fronts, in news articles or press releases, on business cards, in advertisements, or, at their most naked, in conversations.

There are simply no imaginable circumstances in which company names can exist without contextual, explanatory support, which means they are free to perform more productive tasks.

2. Invented Product & Corporation Names

There are basically two types of invented names for products or corporations:

1) Names built upon Greek and Latin roots. Examples: Acquent, Agilent, Alliant, Aquent.

The upside:

- These names breeze through the trademark process because they are unique, eliminating the potential for trademark conflict.
- For companies looking for a hassle-free way to secure a domain name without a modifier, this is a fairly painless route to go.
- They are free of negative connotations.
- Because these names are built upon Greek and Latin morphemes, they are felt to be serious sounding.
- For the above reasons, these are the easiest names to push through the approval process at gigantic global corporations.

The downside:

- Because these types of names are built on Greek and Latin morphemes, you need the advertising budget of a gigantic global corporation to imbue them with meaning and get people to remember them.
- While they don't carry any direct negative messages, such names do cast a cold, sanitized persona.
- These are names with no potential marketing energy -- they are image-free and emotionally void.

2) Poetically constructed names that are based on rhythm and the experience of saying them. Examples: Snapple, Oreo, Google, Kleenex.

The upside:

- They breeze through the trademark process.
- Easy domain name acquisition.
- By design, the target audience likes saying these names, which helps propel and saturate them throughout the target audience.
- Highly memorable.
- Emotionally engaging.
- They are rich with potential marketing energy.

The downside:

- Tougher for a marketing department to get corporate approval for. When making a case for a name based on things like "fun to say, memorable, viral, and emotionally engaging," you need to present a solid, quantifiable case. Igor can show you how.

3. Experiential Product & Corporate Names

Experiential names offer a direct connection to something real, to a part of direct human experience. They rise above descriptive names because their message is more about the experience than the task.

For instance, in the web portal space, descriptive product names include Infoseek, GoTo, FindWhat, AllTheWeb, etc. Experiential names of web portals include such product names as Explorer, Magellan, Navigator, and Safari.

The upside:

- These names make sense to the consumer.
- They map to the consumer's experience with the company or product.
- Because they require little explanation, experiential names are easily approved in a corporate process.
- They work best for products within a brand strategy designed to accumulate brand equity for both the company and the product.
- Experiential company and product names are most effective for the early entrants in a business sector, becoming less effective for later adopters.

The downside:

- Because they are so intuitive, experiential names are embraced across many industries with high frequency, making them harder to trademark.
- These are names that tend to be historically common in the branding world.
- Their over-usage makes them less effective in the long run. For instance, while Explorer, Navigator and Safari are web portal names, they are also the names of SUVs.
- The similarity in tone of these names across an industry is indicative of similarities in positioning. As web portal names, Explorer, Navigator, Safari and Magellan are all saying exactly the same things in exactly the same ways to exactly the same people. Consequently, they aren't pulling any weight when it comes to differentiating a brand.

4. Evocative Product & Company Names

One important way that evocative names differ from others is that they evoke the positioning of a company or product, rather than describing a function or a direct experience.

Continuing with more examples of web portal company names:

InfoSeek, LookSmart = functional
Explorer, Navigator = experiential
Yahoo = positioning (Evocative)

Another example, from the airline sector:

Trans World Airlines = functional
United = experiential
Virgin = positioning (Evocative)

and finally, from the computer industry:

Digital Equipment = functional
Gateway = experiential
Apple = positioning (Evocative)

The upside:

- A rare type of name, making it a powerful differentiator.
- Nonlinear and multidimensional, making it deeply engaging.
- Helps create a brand image that is bigger than the goods and services a company offers.
- Trademark process is better than average.
- When created in sync with positioning, it is a branding force that can dominate an industry.

The downside:

- When created out of sync with brand positioning, it's an ugly mess.
- Because evocative product and company names are created to compliment positioning rather than goods and services, they are the toughest type of names to get corporate approval for, being a bit of an abstraction for those outside the marketing department.

For advice on how to create and secure buy-in for evocative product and company names, see the Naming Process Filters- Evocative Names, in the Naming Tools section below.

STEP 4: Trademark Prescreening of Names

During a naming project, we prescreen all names we present to clients against the USPTO trademark database, to make sure no time is wasted considering names for a project that do not have a good chance of being available for registration.

We also engage the services of several fine trademark attorneys, who can screen names with greater precision and offer their professional feedback as well.

We do this in order to feel confident that the names your attorney submits for final trademark screening and application have been deemed by an attorney as likely to pass muster for registration. If not, valuable time is lost.

Other options include international trademark screening performed by one of our trademark attorneys, a global linguistic check of leading names in fifteen languages, and detailed [NameProtect](#) trademark and common law searches.

STEP 5: Creative / Testing

These are tasks that are constantly performed throughout our process. However, near the end of every project it comes time to decide which of the leading name candidates will best serve our clients.

At this point, the job is to exhaustively and specifically flesh out the relative strengths of each name. We present names with a range of taglines and contextual positioning support in the form of print ads or commercial treatments. This presentation is key to helping everyone involved understand how a given product or company name could work in your marketing and advertising campaigns. It lifts the naming process out of the realm of theory and breathes life into the names, a vital step in the decision-making process.

These same materials are designed to work seamlessly for any focus group testing or market research that you feel is necessary. We can advise you and/or run the testing phase for you if you wish. And we have extensive experience presenting positioning, brand strategies, names and taglines to boards of directors.

Here is a sampling of some of the many contextual support images created during the course of Igor's [Tickle project](#) (images blurred to respect photo rights):



STEP 6: Names and Taglines

Once a name is chosen, we more fully develop a range of taglines, images and language that help you pinpoint the most effective, perfectly nuanced personality with which to present your name.

A key point at this stage is exploring how different taglines and collateral can shift and enhance the efficacy of your name and brand. For example, here are a few ad lines and taglines that the name Igor brings to the table:

- Igor. Get over the hump.
- Igor. A few spare parts and a good storm. (The ingredients of all innovation.)
- Igor. Throw the switch.
- Igor. Bringing your vision to life.
- Igor. A Moveable Beast.
- Igor. Own your shadow.
- Igor. Talk of the town.
- Igor. No job too horrifying.
- Igor. The other white meat.
- Igor. Never say die.
- Igor. A good brain is hard to find.
- Igor. Alive.
- Igor. Better living through science.
- Igor. Building the perfect beast.

And on and on and on. When deciding between names for your own project, go ahead and make a list of taglines for each potential name. It will make the decision-making process crystal clear, because if you can't get inspired by a particular name, your customers aren't likely to.

One of the most important things that the best brands accomplish is being thought of as greater than the goods and services offered. Nike's "Just Do It" helps them rise above selling sneakers. Apple's "Think Different" is bigger than computers. Fannie Mae's

"We're in the American Dream Business" elevates them from mere mortgage brokers.

Like names, taglines come in four flavors. Sometimes it makes sense for an evocative name to be launched with a functional tagline, migrating to an evocative tagline over time. The specifics of your business, where it is going, and the state of your industry will define which of the many different combinations of types of name and types of tagline will be most effective.

III. NAMING TOOLS

- A. Naming Process Filters – Evocative Names
- B. Name Evaluation
 - Blank Name Evaluation Chart
- C. Naming Taxonomy Charts

A. Naming Process Filters – Evocative Names

One of the keys to successful company and product naming is understanding exactly how your audience will interact with a new name. Creating a filter that evaluates names in the same way that your target market will is essential to both creating the best name possible and to getting that name approved and implemented by your company. Since an evocative name is one of the toughest to develop and obtain buy-in for, we've detailed one of the necessary filters here.

The biggest challenge that evocative names (see page 7 above) face in surviving a naming exercise is the fact that they portray the positioning of a company or product rather than the goods and services or the experience of those goods and services. Unless everyone understands the positioning and the correlation between it and an evocative name, this is the type of feedback that evocative names will generate:

Virgin Airlines

- Says "we're new at this"
- Public wants airlines to be experienced, safe and professional
- Investors won't take us seriously
- Religious people will be offended

Caterpillar

- Tiny, creepy-crawly bug
- Not macho enough – easy to squash
- Why not "bull" or "workhorse"?

- Destroys trees, crops, responsible for famine

Banana Republic

- Derogatory cultural slur
- You'll be picketed by people from small, hot countries

Yahoo!

- Yahoo!! It's Mountain Dew!
- Yoohoo! It's a chocolate drink in a can!
- Nobody will take stock quotes and world news seriously from a bunch of "Yahoos"

Oracle

- Unscientific
- Unreliable
- Only foretold death and destruction
- Only fools put their faith in an Oracle
- Sounds like "orifice" – people will make fun of us

The Gap

- Means something is missing
- The Generation Gap is a bad thing – we want to sell clothes to all generations
- In need of repair
- Incomplete
- Negative

Stingray

- A slow, ugly, and dangerous fish – slow, ugly and dangerous are the last qualities we want to associate with our fast, powerful, sexy sports car
- The "bottom feeding fish" part isn't helping either

Fannie Mae / Freddie Mac

- I don't want hillbilly residents of Dogpatch handling my finances.
- They don't sound serious, and this is about a very serious matter.

Clearly, the public doesn't think about names in this fashion, but internal naming committees almost always do. Getting a committee to acknowledge this difference and to interact as the public does is step one.

Having the naming committee evaluate evocative names *based on their positioning* is the next step:

Virgin

- A *Positioning*: different, confident, exciting, alive, human, provocative, fun. The innovative name forces people to create a separate box in their head to put it in.
- B *Qualities*: Self-propelling, Connects Emotionally, Personality, Deep Well.

Oracle

- *Positioning*: different, confident, superhuman, evocative, powerful, forward thinking.
- *Qualities*: Self-propelling, Connects Emotionally, Personality, Deep Well.

B. Name Evaluation

When considering potential names for your company, product or service, it is vital that the process be kept as objective as possible, and that subjective personal responses to names, such as "I like it" or "I don't like it" or "I don't like it because it reminds me of an old girlfriend/boyfriend" are exactly that – subjective and personal, and have no bearing on whether or not a potential name will actually work in the marketplace as a powerful brand that supports all your positioning goals.

All well and good, but clients often ask us to be more specific, to explain objectively just what makes a name work. With that in mind, we created a straightforward way to dissect potential names into the following nine categories to make it easier to understand why name work or don't work, and to more easily weigh the pros and cons of one name versus another:

Appearance – Simply how the name looks as a visual signifier, in a logo, an ad, on a billboard, etc. The name will always be seen in context, but it will be seen, so looks are important.

Distinctive – How differentiated is a given name from its competition. Being distinctive is only one element that goes into making a name memorable, but it is a required element, since if a name is not distinct from a sea of similar names it will not be memorable. It's important, when judging distinctiveness, to always consider the name in the context of the product it will serve, and among the competition it will spar with for the consumer's attention.

Depth – Layer upon layer of meaning and association. Names with great depth never reveal all they have to offer all at once, but keep surprising you with new ideas.

Energy – How vital and full of life is the name? Does it have buzz? Can it carry an ad campaign on its shoulders? Is it a force to be reckoned with? These are all aspects of a name's energy level.

Humanity – A measure of a name's warmth, its "humanness," as opposed to names that are cold, clinical, unemotional. Another – though not foolproof – way to think about this category is to imagine each of the names as a nickname for one of your children.

Positioning – How relevant the name is to the positioning of the product or company being named, the service offered, or to the industry served. Further, how many relevant messages does the name map to?

Sound – Again, while always existing in a context of some sort or another, the name WILL be heard, in radio or television commercials, being presented at a trade show, or simply being discussed in a cocktail party conversation. Sound is twofold – not only how a name sounds, but how easily it is spoken by those who matter most: the potential customer. Word of mouth is a big part of the marketing of a company, product or service with a great name, but if people aren't comfortable saying the name, the word won't get out.

"33" – The force of brand magic, and the word-of-mouth buzz that a name is likely to generate. Refers to the mysterious "33" printed on the back of Rolling Rock beer bottles from decades that everybody talks about because nobody is really sure what it means. "33" is that certain something that makes people lean forward and want to learn more about a brand, and to want to share the brand with others. The "33" angle is different for each name.

Trademark – As in the ugly, meat hook reality of trademark availability. Scoring is easy here, as there are only three options, and nothing is subjective: 10 = likely available for trademark; 5 = may be available for trademark; and 0 = not likely available for trademark. All of the names on this list have been prescreened by a trademarked attorney and have been deemed "likely" for trademark registration.

These are the categories we scrupulously consider every name we present to clients, and we've done it so much that it has become second nature to us. But for those just stepping into these confusing brand waters, it often helps to rate names in each of these categories and compare the rankings. In the table below, we have attempted to quantify our impressions of several brand names in the music / media downloading sector by assigning up to 10 points in each of the nine categories; the more points, the better (90 maximum total points):

NAME	APPEARANCE	DISTINCTIVE	DEPTH	ENERGY	HUMANITY	POSITIONING 1	SOUND	"33"	TRADEMARK 2	TOTAL
Virgin (Digital)	10	10	10	9	9	10	9	10	10	87
Yahoo (Launch)	10	10	7	10	8	10	10	8	10	83
Rhapsody	6	7	6	7	7	7	7	6	10	63
BeSonic	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	10	49
iMusic	3	1	4	3	3	3	3	0	10	30

1. We can't know the actual positioning of established brands, so we're treating these names as if they hadn't been used yet and are under consideration for a product which has the primary positioning goals of being a very unique, energetic name that has the potential to become a powerful brand that is lodged in the heads of millions of consumers.
2. Since these are all established brands that all own their respective trademarks, they each get an automatic score of "10". For names under consideration during an actual naming project, for simplicity you may choose one of three options: "10" = likely available for trademark; "5" = may be available for trademark; and "0" = not likely available for trademark (at which point the name should be removed from consideration).

The point of this exercise is to break the names down into relevant components to better understand what makes some names better than others and why, and it should give you an understanding of how we arrive at the rankings you see in our name taxonomies, such as the one for [music and media downloading services](#). Rarely will a name score the highest across every category, but the best names score consistently well. Ultimately, it's about defining "like" and "don't like" not in personal, subjective terms, but in terms of how names support the brand positioning.

Now you should have a clear idea about why certain names work better than others. But this exercise is also about feeling confident that you chose the best name for your company or product by understanding why certain names work best when all factors of name, positioning, and competitive context are taken into consideration.

next page: a blank name evaluation chart...

C. Name Taxonomy Charts

We developed the name taxonomy format to bring an elegant simplicity to a complex set of intertwined naming elements. The taxonomy chart keeps the process focused on the competitive aspect, forces you to quantify both the negative and positive attributes of each name under consideration, sets a high standard for you to meet, and gives everyone involved a clean and easy framework in which to disparage, insult, and belittle each other.

On the pages below are name taxonomy charts for the following sectors:

- Accounting / Business Services Names Airline Names
- Airline Names
- Biotech / Pharmaceutical Names
- Computer Port Technology Names
- Juice Names
- Margarine Names
- Music and Media Download Services Names
- Search Engine, Browser and Web Portal Names
- Social Network Names
- Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) Names
- Sweet Snack Food Names
- Toothpaste Names
- and a Blank Taxonomy for your own use

next page: Accounting / Business Services Names Airline Names...

Taxonomy of Accounting and Business Services Names

As usual, and as you might expect, most of the accounting firms, tax accountants, CPAs, accounting software products, payroll and business services companies on this list have lower-level functional names. Which was fine for us, because once again here was an industry with few names or primary messages that stood out from the pack, allowing for our work to differentiate itself all the more powerfully.

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5				Vanilla	5
4			Quicken		4
3	Quickbooks			Peachtree	3
2	Paychex		Fidelity Intuit		2
1			Intaact Interacct Invisible Accountant Real Tax	By the Book	1
0	ADP (Automatic Data Processing) AmeriPay H&R Block Intax KPMG Mellon TedTax		Advantage Payroll Services Exult		0
-1	Arthur Anderson BDO Seidman Bhatia & Co. Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Ernst & Young GMN International Grant Thornton Harrod CPA Group Hewitt Associates LOR Management Services Mazars Group Moss Adams Pricewaterhouse	Accounta Avanco Ceridian Perquest	Co-Advantage Resources Precise Accounting Smart Pros Accounting		-1

	Coopers Simmons & Assoc. Wertz & Co. Wright, Ford, Young & Co.				
-2	Accounting Group Cyber Financial Solutions On Line Accountant PayMaxx Payroll 1 Payroll Online Small Business Solutions SurePayroll Tax-Ease US Tax Help				-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

Levels of Engagement: These eight levels (y-axis levels from minus 2 to plus 5) represent the amount of material (meaning, stories, associations, imagery, multiple layers) in a name the audience has to play with and personalize – and how "engaged" they are by a name. Names in the minus 2 level are the least engaging, and likely to be quickly forgotten; the higher the number the better, with level 5 being the best.

Functional Names: The lowest common denominator of names, usually either named after a person, purely descriptive of what the company or product does, or a pre- or suffixed reference to functionality. (Infoseek, LookSmart)

Invented Names: "Invented" as in a made-up name (Acquient, Agilent, Alliant, Google) or a non-English name that is not widely known.

Experiential Names: A direct connection to something real, a part of direct human experience. Usually literal in nature, but presented with a touch of imagination. (Netscape, Palm Pilot)

Evocative Names: These names are designed to evoke the positioning of a company or product rather than the goods and services or the experience of those goods and services. Removed from direct experience, but relevant – evoking memories, stories, and many levels of association. (Virgin, Apple, Cracker Jack)

Taxonomy of Airline Names

Before Virgin came along, all the airlines had the same kind of name: either Functional names that were descriptive of the region they fly over (Northwest, Southwest, American, etc.), or Experiential names that tried to speak to a higher aspiration (United, Vanguard). Along came Virgin into an industry without any strong, *evocative* brands, setting the bar higher than probably any other name in any industry. Now new airline names have begun to enter the fray in the space created between Virgin and the rest of the pack.

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5				Virgin	5
4	JetBlue			Ted Jazz	4
3				Hooters Aloha Olympic	3
2		Qantas*	Go Zip	Song Frontier	2
1	Alitalia		Vanguard	Tower Air	1
0	Midway Trans World Pan American Delta Continental American Alaska AeroMexico Air France British Airways		United		0
-1	Northwest Southwest U.S. Airways Eastern America West World Airways				-1
-2	Express Jet ValueJet AirJet EasyJet				-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

* Qantas is actually an acronym for "Queensland And Northern Territory Air Service." However, we're classifying the name as Invented rather than Functional because most people do not know what Qantas stands for, it is not written all in upper case as most acronyms are, it is longer than most acronyms, and indeed, it has been successfully branded as an entity in itself, not for what it may stand for, which in fact is never even mentioned.

Taxonomy of Biotech and Pharmaceutical Names

The Biotech / Pharmaceutical industries are ripe for a great, high-level evocative name to surge to the head of the pack. As you can see by the taxonomy below, most companies in this space are clustered together with either functional (Amgen, Biogen, Curagen) or Experiential (Incyte, Xcyte, Paradigm, Aradigm) names that offer very little in the way of audience engagement.

The names that rise to the top of this chart do so because they are different, but most importantly because they are different for a good reason. These companies are using their names to distance themselves from the negative baggage that exists in their industry in the same way that Merck and ADM are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to assure the public that they are not cold and uncaring, and are working with nature rather than against it. Further, these names help distance these few companies from the "GenGen"* names that conjure memories of lost investments.

For more, see our article Better Naming Through Chemistry.

[* "GenGen" is our term for all of the "me too" company names that begin or end in "gen" in the biotech / pharmaceutical sector.]

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5					5
4					4
3					3
2			Life Technologies	Blue Heron Cypress Guava Nektar Orchid Torrent	2
1	The Great American Gene Company	Daji Biosciences	Cubist Discovery Labs. Evolutionary Genomics Icon Lexicon Pilot Quantum Biotechnologies	Argonaut Copernicus Isis Lynx Onyx Titan Trinity	1

0	<p>Bayer Berlex Bristol-Myers Squibb GlaxoSmithKline Lilly Merck Pfizer</p>	<p>Chiron Idexx Irazu</p>	<p>Affinity BioReagents Arena Caliper Cor LifeSpan BioSciences Memory Pain Panacea</p>	<p>Keystone Laboratories</p>	0
-1	<p>Applied Molecular Evolution Bio Science Contract Production Human Genome Sciences Large Scale Biology Molecular Devices Pharmacia Protein Design Labs Protein Pathways Protein Sciences</p>	<p>Abgenix Adolor Affymetrix AGY Alios Arcaris Arqule AstraZeneca Aventis CHIMERx Corixa Cygnus Cytrx Dyax Elitra Exiqon Embrex Enzon Hyseq Icos Idun Nabi Nobex Novex Novartis Oxis PanVera Promega Telik Tanox Tripos Tularik Valentis Vistra Vysis Xoma</p>	<p>3-D Pharma. Albany Molecular Research Aradigm Array Avant Boston Life Sciences British Biotech Collateral Connectics Diversa Elitra Ergo Science Essential Hawaii Biotech. Illumina Incyte Inspire Integrated Biomolecule Integrated DNA Technologies Kinetix La Jolla Pharma. Matrix Millenium Myriad Genetics New Century Northwest Bio. Paradigm Genetics Prototek Texas Biotechnology Triangle Visible Genetics Xcyte</p>		-1
-2	<p>Alpha Diagnostic Alpha DNA Amgen Avigen Bio Tech. General Biocryst Biogen</p>				-2

<p>Biogenex Biomarin BioMedicines Biomira BioNumerik Biopure Bioreliance BioStratum Bio-Synthesis Biotime Biotransplant Biotrin Celera Genomics Celgene Cell Genesys Cell Pathways Cell Therapeutics Cellegy Cholestech CIPHERgen Clontech Collagenex Curagen Cyanotech Cytogen Deltagen Depomed Digene Ecogen Entremed Envirogen Exegenics Galagen Genaera Gene Logic Gene Tools Genecor Genelabs Genentech Genetics Institute GeneTrol Genetronics Genome Genomic Solutions Genosys Genox Genset Generic GenVec Genzyme Geron Igen Imclone Systems Immtech Immucell Immucor Immunex Immunogen Immunomedics Immune Response Insmad Intracel Introgen Invitrogen</p>				
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<p>Lifecell LigoChem Maxygen Medarex Medimmune Meiogen Metabasis Metabolex MetaMorphix Microbia Millipore MitoKor Myogen Nanogen Neopharm NeuralStem Neurocrine Neurogen Neuron Nexell Nitromed Novagen Orapharma Origen Otogene Oxigene Pepceuticals LTD Pharmacopeia Pharmacyclics Pharmadyne Pharmasset Pharmos ProdiGene Progenics Repligen Research Genetics Supergen Synthegen Transgene Transgenomic Transkaryotic TransMolecular TransTech UroGenesys Vaxgen Virologic Viropharma VistaGen Zonagen</p>				
<p>FUNCTIONAL</p>	<p>INVENTED</p>	<p>EXPERIENTIAL</p>	<p>EVOCATIVE</p>	

Taxonomy of Computer Port Technology Consumer Product Names

Comparing the names of computer networking technologies, peripheral device ports and the devices that love them.

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5				Airport FireWire	5
4	Wi-Fi				4
3		Bluetooth *			3
2			Click!	Full Metal Card Magic Gate	2
1	Aerocard iLink		JumpDrive	Bullet Drive ClipperCom Credit Card Star Card	1
0	CompactFlash Linx Memory Stick Micro Vault Microdrive Turbo Flash USB		Cruzer ExpressCard	Pyro	0
-1	Aopen Busport Easidock Easyshare Hi-Phone Megahertz PCI PCXpocket SmartSwitch SwapSmart		Linear Navman RealPort		-1
-2	802.11a 802.11b 802.11g CARDport IEEE 1394 PCMCIA		Netelligent	Cyber CyberExpress	-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

* **Bluetooth:** Harald I Bluetooth (Danish Harald Blåtand) was the King of Denmark between 940 and 985 AD. However, since most non-Danes probably aren't familiar with this bit of history, we are treating the name as Invented. The history behind the name does provide a story to tell, giving the name greater depth, and thus a higher ranking, than it would if it were just a random pairing such as Blue Martini.

Taxonomy of Juice Names

If you're looking for a juicy name taxonomy, you've come to the right page. Here is our competitive analysis name taxonomy of juice brand names. Fresh squeezed, and all the usual metaphors.

For more juicy branding material, see our article about [Juice Branding](#).

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5		Snapple			5
4		Odwalla POM Tropicana V8	Sunkist	Naked	4
3	Simply Orange			Ocean Spray	3
2	Dole Mott's Welch's	Clamato SoBe	MinuteMaid	After the Fall Crystal Geyser Nantucket Nectars	2
1	Apple Time Florida's Natural Hawaii's Own Santa Cruz Texsun	Qoo Vruit	Sunsweet	Capri Sun Northland Tree Top	1
0	Hansen's Kerns Langers Martinelli's RW Knudsen		Freshers Kedem* Treesweet		0
-1			Good Day		-1
-2					-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

* Kedem is a transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning: old, ancient, traditional. Kedem is a company that sells kosher wine and grape juice primarily to the American Jewish market.

Taxonomy of Margarine Names

If you thought that margarines -- aka "butter substitutes" -- existed in a parallel universe, you were right! Here is our competitive analysis name taxonomy of margarine brand names. Eat your heart out.

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5					5
4					4
3		Parkay		Blue Bonnet Land O Lakes	3
2	Butter Buds	Olivio		Willow Run	2
1	Canola Harvest Soy Garden	Saffola	Earth Balance Smart Balance	Chiffon Country Crock Imperial	1
0	Veggie Butter	Romi	I Can't Believe It's Not Butter Move Over Butter		0
-1	Brummel and Brown Fleishman	Nucoa Nuvel	Promise Pure		-1
-2		Benecol	Take Control		-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

Taxonomy of Music and Media Download Services Names

AKA the iTunes space, but here including movie as well as music download services, plus tangential services such as NetFlix and TiVO that offer different combinations of online, offline, broadband, cable or satellite delivery of multimedia content.

As usual, the overwhelming mass of media download services are clustered in the lower left corner of the chart, representing the least engaging [functional names](#), and this sample is probably but a mere fraction of all that is out there. Why do they do it? Perhaps in this case they are spurred on by the success of iTunes and how it has entered the public consciousness. However, what they fail to realize, is that iTunes is propelled by the iPod phenomenon and both are byproducts of the Apple branding juggernaut, not to mention being one of the first to market with a service that gets it right.

Woe to the iTunes followers who believe that names such as emusic, imusic, Musicnet and Netmusic will ever get noticed in this sea of similar services.

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5		TiVO		Virgin Digital	5
4				Amazon.com Yahoo! Launch	4
3		Napster		Atom Films	3
2		Epitonic Vitiminic XM Satellite Radio		Rhapsody Sirius Satellite Radio	2
1	Audiogalaxy Soundbuzz		Connect Glide Magazine		1
0	Ampcast Disclogic Hear Music iRATE radio Like Television ReplayTV SHOUTcast Smithsonian Global Sound	Kazaa	BeSonic purevolume zerophase	Akimbo	0
-1	AllCoolMusic AOL Music ARTISTdirect download.com IFILM iTunes IUMA (Internet Underground	Lycos Music	K-Lite Mindawn Partners In Rhyme		-1

	Music Archive) MovieAdvanced MSN Music PeopleSound Wal-Mart				
-2	123MovieDownload Cinema Download DivX Movies DownloadShield.com easyMusic.com emusic ezMP3s.com FileSharingCity.com Free Movie Now IC-Musicmedia imusic iMusicShare Internet Downloads InternetMovies.com MovieDownloadWorld MP3.com MP3DownloadHQ.com Mp3Downloading MP3Must Musicload Musicnet MyFreeTunes.com Netlabels NetMusic Safe-Share.com Shared Movies SoundClick Ultimate Movie Downloads				-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

Taxonomy of Search Engine, Browser and Web Portal Names

Here are some names you may be familiar with in the Internet industry. Note how many search engines went with Functional names that include the words "search/seek" or "crawler/spider".

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5				Yahoo!	5
4		Google			4
3			Magellan Safari		3
2		Firefox	Explorer Navigator	Northern Light	2
1		Mozilla	Ask Jeeves Excite Netscape Snap	Camino	1
0		A9	Altavista Cyberdog Dogpile Fathead	Mamma Opera Overture	0
-1	AOL GoTo HotBot ICQ MSN Open Directory	Alexa Inktomi * Lycos Teoma Thunderstone WiseNut	goHip mySimon	iCab Rex	-1
-2	AllTheWeb Cyber411 FindWhat.com InfiniSearch Infoseek InfoTiger LookSmart MegaSpider MetaGopher MonsterCrawler Planet Search QuestFinder SavvySearch Search King SearchPort SuperCrawler				-2

	WebCrawler What-U-Seek				
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

* **Inktomi:** In Lakota mythology, Iktomi is a spider-trickster god and a culture-hero for the Lakota people. But since most people don't know that (or care), we are treating it as an Invented name. And besides, the "spider/crawler" metaphor has been pretty thoroughly mined by search engines.

Social Networks Name Taxonomy

Social networks have existed on the web for some time in the form of discussion groups, online communities, bulletin boards, webring and matchmaking services. This chart is confined to rating the names of the new breed of social networks, those that leverage many levels of relationships in the form of "a friend of a friend."

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5				Tickle	5
4				Ringo (purchased by Tickle) Tribe	4
3	Friendster		Six Degrees		3
2	Live Journal				2
1	ICQ Match.com Meetup Spotme Visible Path	Ryze		Spoke Software	1
0	Craigslist Lunch Partners RealContacts Upcoming.org	Sona			0
-1	CAN (Community Action Network) Classmates Ecademy EveryonesConnected Evite Friendspot FriendSurfer Friendzy	Alpha3 Orkut Plaxo Squiby Yafro	Affinity Engines itsnotwhatyouknow WhizSpark ZeroDegrees	InCircle PlanetAll POP (People on Page) TheSquare	-1

	LinkedIn myspace PayDemocracy RealContacts				
-2	2ofaKind.com AnotherFriend.com Contact Network Corporation ManyOne people2people PeopleAggregator	Huminity Semaview			-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

Taxonomy of Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) Names

This chart of SUV names reveals a singular positioning strategy that permeates most of the brand names in this industry, resulting in the bulk of these names being assigned low marks on this scale. It's not that the names themselves are poor. Rather, it's because the names don't help to differentiate one vehicle from another; many of them are variations on the same theme (rugged, outdoorsy) and not pulling any marketing weight. Why does Suburban rate an elevated position? Because it's the most refreshingly different and honest name in the Experiential category.

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5		Jeep			5
4					4
3			Suburban		3
2		Hummer Jackaroo Jeepster		Element	2
1		Xterra	Amigo Aviator Sidekick	Avalanche Cayenne Safari	1
0	Land Cruiser Overland Range Rover Pathfinder TrailBlazer Travelall	Unimog	Blazer Discovery Defender Escape Excursion Expedition Explorer	Armada Frontier Highlander Matrix Passport Samurai Silverado	0

			Forester Freelander Mountaineer Navigator Scout Tracker Trooper Wrangler	Tundra Typhoon	
-1	4Runner Rav4	Grand Vitara Korando	Envoy Liberty Rendezvous Tribute	Aztek Bordeux Bronco Cherokee Comanche Durango Kahuna Montana Montero Murano Navaho Rainier Rodeo Santa Fe Sequoia Sonoma Sorento Tacoma Tahoe Touareg Yukon	-1
-2	CR-V EVX EX LX 470 MDX ML55 QX4 SLX SRX X5 XC90 XL-7	Terracross VehiCROSS	Bravada Escalade Sportage	Axiom	-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

Taxonomy of Sweet Snack Food Names

The names of snack foods are tough to rank in an unbiased way. Our perceptions of snack food names are deeply influenced by emotional connections to the products formed at an early age.

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5		Jell-O Oreo		Cracker Jack Moon Pie	5
4	Pop Tarts	Fiddle Faddle Fig Newtons Nutter Butter Twinkies		Cool Whip Ding Dongs Hobnobs Pinwheels Sweetie Pie	4
3		Spotted Dick	Chips Ahoy!	Cameo Cloud Nine Grasshoppers Honey Maid Little Schoolboy RingDings Sno Ball	3
2		Nilla Vanilla Wafers	Hit Krispy Kreme Mystic Mints	Barnum's Animals Pepperidge Farm Suzy Q's Zebra Cakes Zoot Fruits	2
1	Animal Crackers Biscos Bunny Biscuits Cafe Creams SnackWell's Teddy Grahams	Mallomars Peak Freatn Ruggers Wafers Sandies Screaming Yellow Zonkers	Famous Amos Ginger Snaps Kozy Shack Mother's Poppycock Tastykake	Boulder Brownies Britannia Hostess Stella D'oro Vienna Fingers	1
0	ChipsChoc Cookie Stix Cup O' Jelly Fruit By The Foot Pecanz		Chewly Chippy Chips Crispin Grandma's Lucky Rolls Pecan Passion Pop'ems Snackin' Grahams	Little Debbie Lorna Doone	0
-1	E.L. Fudge Marshmallow	Fruitsations Otis Spunkmeyer	Munch'ems My*T*Fine		-1

	Twirls Mini Butter Puff Peanut Puff Soft Batch Sugar Wafers Toaster Pastries Wafer Rolls				
-2		Hydrox Droxies			-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

next page: Taxonomy of Toothpaste Names...

Taxonomy of Toothpaste Names

When you Reach for those Pearl Drops to give your mouth an Ultra Bright Super Smile, is your Sure Choice based solely on what will make you the most attractive Close-Up, or is it Ultrabright branding that's taking Aim at you as if yours were the First Teeth to Crest the tide of Oral-B(eauty)?

Here are some toothpaste brand names that put their branding money where your mouth is. This list does not include all the large brands that have many different health and beauty products of which toothpaste is but one.

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5					5
4				Pearl Drops	4
3			Aquafresh	Crest	3
2	Oral-B	Pepsodent	Gleem	Rembrandt	2
1		Sensodyne Topol	Close-Up		1
0	Colgate First Teeth	Auromere Janina Peelu Vicco	Aim NutriSmile Power Smile Reach Super Smile Ultrabright		0
-1	Plus+White	Homeodent Listerine Mentadent Orohyi Viadent Zooth	Sure Choice Complete Care	Apothecary Kingfisher	-1
-2	Healthy Mouth Natural Dentist	Biotene Boiron			-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

Blank Name Taxonomy Chart

Here is a blank name taxonomy chart you can print. Try plotting your and your competition's product or company names on this chart and see how they sort out.

	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5					5
4					4
3					3
2					2
1					1
0					0
-1					-1
-2					-2
	FUNCTIONAL	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

IV. Studies in Naming

- A. **Allstream** – the perils of overused language
- B. **Avlimil** – an unusual but effective brand positioning strategy
- C. **Chrysler Crossfire** – considering names from the consumer's point of view
- D. **IBM's T-Rex** – code names vs. "official names"
- E. **Mercedes** – Alphanumeric Car Naming, and Luxury Brand Equity
- F. **Pepperidge Farm** – a wonderful job of creating evocative product name
- G. **Roomba** – a perfect product name
- H. **Silk** – great consumer product name creation in action

A. Company Name Change: We All Stream for Allstream

In mid-2003, AT&T Canada changed its name to Allstream. The new company name is explained [on the Allstream website](#):

Allstream is a new beginning for a new company. Our name change from AT&T Canada signals our new status as a fully independent company with a fresh new outlook. We understand that the continuous flow of information that travels through networks is more than just data - it's the value people create.

We are now focused more than ever on providing communication solutions that enable your company to communicate, collaborate and compete more effectively.

Unfortunately, the communication solution they chose for themselves neither communicates or competes effectively. A cursory search for other corporations in the digital information sector with "stream" in their names turns up:

Stream, CapitalStream, On Stream, I-Stream, Bean-Stream, Silver Stream, Rapid Stream, Stream Theory, Health Stream, Digital Stream, Island Stream, Stream Down, Stream Logic, Streamlogics, Data Stream, Stream Soft, Jet Stream, Stream Software, Metric Stream, Packet Stream, Stream Box, Vital Stream, Code Stream and X-Stream Audio.

The use of words such as "stream" that have already reached saturation in the culture illustrates why we begin all projects with a thorough **competitive analysis**, to not only understand which potential product or company name directions have been mined already in a given sector, but to quantify the language usage in all relevant messaging.

B. Avlimil – Gilt by Association

Viagra's successful sexual conquest of the male organ has spawned a flood of products designed to spread the joy in the opposite direction. The best-named Female Sexual Dysfunction remedy by far is [Niagara](#) – it's powerful, wet, and funny, just like good sex. And it obviously parries well the thrust of the name "Viagra."

But now there's a new girl in town, and she is taking a far more clinical approach to seduction. Her come-hither moniker? [Avlimil](#). Sure it's cold, inhuman and unmemorable, but then we've all "dated" someone like that.

Actually it's part of a unique strategy erected to whet your appetite for Avlimil and elevate it above the others vying for your attention.

You see, Niagara and Avlimil are both herbal remedies. But while Niagara is proud and confident of who it is, Avlimil is trying to sound like "serious" prescription medicine. And it's not just the name. In the TV commercial the fidgety female spokesperson – in a clear reference to the drug Viagra – says, "Men have their little blue pill, and now we have ours." The illusion is furthered in the packaging:



And what does the mysterious descriptor "(salvia rubus) tablets" mean? Salvia comes from the Latin *salveo*, meaning "I am well," and an herb, Salvia, used for healing, while *rubus* is Latin for bramble or berry. It's apothecary-speak for sage and raspberry leaf, Avlimil's main ingredients. The whole campaign is well thought out and deftly executed to fully leverage the success and mind-share of Viagra.

C. High Performance Naming – Chrysler Crossfire



Chrysler's hot new sports coupe, the Crossfire, has a name that does justice to the car's edgy, explosive looks. Clearly, the marketing department had an extraordinary naming process in place, as well as the insight and fortitude required to get such a controversial name approved in an organization as large as Chrysler.

Imagine the feedback when the name was tested: *Isn't it dangerous to get caught in a crossfire? Don't people get killed in a crossfire? Don't we want people to think our car is safe? It's the name of a TV show, why not pick something unique?*

Chrysler understood that consumers don't participate in this kind of literal, negative deconstruction, but rather accept things in the context provided. The failure to recognize this simple truth is what dooms other automakers to give sexy sports cars androgynous names like; M5, S4, 280 Z, SC 430 and C32 AMG.

D. IBM's T-Rex Computer Name

Bang a Gong? Maybe. In May 2003 IBM announced a new mainframe computer. As is often the case with high-tech products, the computer has a great code name and a less than inspiring official name. Time will shortly tell which name prevails. From Geek.com:

IBM is set to unveil T-Rex, the code name for its latest and greatest mainframe computer. The new system will boast more powerful processors, new memory, and an updated operating system. This is the first major upgrade to IBM's mainframe system since 2000.

T-Rex's official name is the eServer zSeries 990, and it boasts up to 32 processors, all of which can be added to the machine's processing capacity on the fly. With an almost tripling of capacity over its closest sibling, T-Rex can "process 450 million e-business transactions a day, or can manage hundreds of virtual Linux servers," according to IBM. T-Rex will start at US\$1 million, but there will be four available models by the beginning of November 2003.

Though even the word "mainframe" sounds outdated, the systems comprise over 40% of IBM's profits. The target companies for the machines are large banks, retailers, and insurance companies whose current code will only run on mainframes. These usually older companies have complex systems built on the old code that simply can't be replaced. T-Rex is expected to go on sale in June.

T-Rex is a great name, given the fact that it will be the biggest baddest mofo on the block. It's especially provocative since both the concept and the term "mainframe" are seen as dinosaurs. T-Rex would be an enormously bold, confident and effective stand to take.

So, what'll it be? T-Rex or eServer zSeries 990? History offers no comfort here. AMD's chip, code named "Sledgehammer," became "Opteron," while Intel's "McKinley" chip became the "Itanium 2."

E. Mercedes – Alphanumeric Car Naming, and Luxury Brand Equity

Mercedes has long named their car models using alphanumerics. It's a system used by most luxury automotive brands (save Rolls Royce) designed to direct the bulk of brand equity to the Mercedes brand name rather than to a particular model. It's very effective when you need consumers to remember three basic concepts and one or two specialty offshoots. Audi and BMW get there with the 4|6|8 and 3|5|7 designations, respectively.

Mercedes, however, is trying to get consumers to associate alphanumeric labels with nine-plus different ideas.

The bare basics are: C-Class, E-Class, S-Class, CLK-Class, CL-Class, SLK-Class, SL-Class, M-Class, G-Class, with a sprinkling of AMGs, SLRs, CDIs and MLs tossed-in where needed for greater obfuscation. And those are just the alpha vegetables in the alphanumeric soup.

Here is the whole 36-car pile up: C230 Kompressor Sport Coupe, C230 Kompressor Sport Sedan, C240 Luxury Sedan, C240 Luxury Wagon, C320 Sport Coupe, C320 Luxury Sedan, C320 Sport Sedan, C55 AMG, E320 Sedan, E320 CDI, E320 Wagon, E500 Sedan, E500 4MATIC Wagon, E55 AMG, S430 Sedan, S500 Sedan, S55 AMG, S600 Sedan, CLK320 Coupe, CLK320 Cabriolet, CLK500 Coupe, CLK500 Cabriolet, CLK55 AMG Coupe, CLK55 AMG Cabriolet, CLS500 Coupe, CLS55 AMG, CL500 Coupe, CL55, AMG CL600, Coupe, CL65 AMG, SLK 350 Roadster, SLK55 AMG Roadster, SL500 Roadster, SL55 AMG, SL600 Roadster, SL65 AMG, ML350 SUV, ML350 SUV Special Edition, ML500 SUV, ML500 SUV Special Edition, G500 SUV, G55 AMG, and SLR McLaren 4MATIC.

The vehicles are priced between \$25,850 and \$452,750, and the names do nothing towards differentiating one from the other; so bye-bye "envy" sales factor. Why pay a hundred and fifty big ones for a car that everyone thinks cost thirty? That's no fun.

Cadillac, in its quest to muscle Mercedes aside has jumped into the fray with the vehicle "names" ESV, EXT, ETS, SRX and XLR, basking in the image mingling.

The only people crazy enough to learn and love the distinctions between the Mercedes C-Class, E-Class, S-Class, CLK-Class, CL-Class, SLK-Class, SL-Class, M-Class, G-Class, AMG, SLR, CDI and ML spend the remainder of their time playing "Prince of Persia, Warrior Within" on the Xbox and aren't likely to purchase a car without parental consent.

Here is [how some of the hairs are split](#):

C-Class Overview

The Mercedes-Benz C-Class offers more value and choice than ever before with the most models and body styles to choose from, and MSRPs starting under \$30,000.

E-Class Overview

Offering European sophistication and performance, the exhilarating Mercedes-Benz E-Class combines the best of sedan luxury with the comfort of a wagon.

S-Class Overview

The premier luxury sedan in the world, the S-Class is the unparalleled expression of elegance, technological innovation, charismatic styling and pure driving pleasure.

CLK-Class Overview

Available in both luxury convertible and pillarless coupe models, the CLK-Class is one of the world's most desirable and exhilarating forms of pure driving pleasure.

CLS-Class Overview

The CLS-Class redefines what a coupe can be. It offers expressive style, poised performance, a 4-seat cabin, but with four doors.

CL-Class Overview

The CL-Class is not just a distinctive and exclusive leader in the luxury coupe market. With its intense performance and refined style, it demands to be driven.

SLK-Class Overview

From its muscular stance inspired by Formula One racing to its athletic performance, the SLK-Class roadster delivers aggressive sports car styling and an exhilarating driving experience

SL-Class Overview

The Mercedes-Benz SL-Class is the latest incarnation of an unmatched automotive legacy, combining unrivaled technological excellence, passionate performance and timeless elegance into flawless perfection.

M-Class Overview

The M-Class is an ever-ready companion whose exemplary design, comprehensive safety features and unmatched versatility make it perfect for active and adventurous lifestyles.

On the edge of your seat for the Mercedes definitions behind G-Class, AMG, SLR, CDI and ML? Of course not -- it's too much work and there's no reward -- two things luxury should never be.

F. Pepperidge Farm – One Smart Cookie



"Get Milk" and lift it high for [Pepperidge Farm](#) in honor of their branding smarts. Here is a look into how and why their cookie naming architecture works.

Below on the left are the names of their chocolate chunk varieties. In the right hand column, in mixed up order, are the distinguishing ingredients. See if you can match the names with the cookie variety:

Name	Variety
Sausalito	Oatmeal Raisin
Santa Cruz	Milk Chocolate w/ Walnuts
Tahoe	Dark Chocolate w/ Toffee and Pecans
Chesapeake	Dark Chocolate w/Pecans
Nantucket	Milk Chocolate w/ Macadamias
Sedona	Dark Chocolate
Montauk	White Chocolate/ Macadamias

The reason you can't guess the correct matchups is at the heart of why the names work so well. A less savvy marketing department would have pushed for a direct correlation between geography and ingredients. That would have resulted in the name "Kona" for a cookie with macadamias and milk chocolate, because that is where the exotic nut is grown.

Well, the milk chocolate with macadamia nut version is called "Sausalito," a foggy little peninsula that could never support the growth of macadamia trees. The same goes for the nippy mountain lake of "Tahoe," the name of the white chocolate and macadamia cookie.

So what is going on here?

Had Pepperidge Farm gone down the literal road, they would have named the cookies after towns and regions that best represent oatmeal, toffee, pecans, raisins, chocolate, and so on.

Instead, they chose the names for the positive images, evocations, and aspirations that they conjure from our collective consciousness.

That makes it "bigger" than the ingredients and "bigger" than cookies, much like Nike's "just do it" and Apple's "think different" elevate them beyond sneakers and computers. When a brand can rise above the goods and services they offer and create a loftier connection with their audience, they indeed have found a recipe for success.

Ok, here are the real matchups:

Name	Variety
Sausalito	Milk Chocolate w/ Macadamias
Santa Cruz	Oatmeal Raisin
Tahoe	White Chocolate/ Macadamias
Chesapeake	Dark Chocolate w/Pecans
Nantucket	Dark Chocolate
Sedona	Dark Chocolate w/ Toffee and Pecans
Montauk	Milk Chocolate w/ Walnuts

Next time, the naked truth behind "Oreo."

G. Roomba – A Perfect Product Name



Oompa Loompa Doompadeedo, Roomba's the perfect product name it's true. [iRobot](#) has a winning name with Roomba. They get extra points for doing it with a made-up name to boot.

Roomba ranks right up there with Snapple, which is not surprising as the two names follow the exact same strategy and construction. Roomba is a disc-shaped robotic vacuum about twelve inches across and three inches high, which quietly and effectively navigates and vacuums a room all on its own. The mind-bender is that when finished, the Roomba finds its charger and plugs itself in.

We've tested two different Roomba models and can tell you that the implied "room dance" in the name is an accurate take on the performance art that takes place when you switch one on. It's a perfect name: fun, rhythmic, original and relevant, just like Snapple.

H. Naming Consumer Products: Silk, A Category Killer



Soy Joy: When naming consumer products, few companies get it just right. [Silk](#), a product brand name for soy milk from the folks at White Wave, is a category killer, meaning that competitors will never be able to find a name that is more effective. Silk is a contraction of Soy + Milk and plays into the positive characteristics of high quality, smooth, pleasurable, and sensual. They've taken an existing word and all of its inherent cultural and experiential qualities and transposed it to an entirely new context.

While names typically fall into one of the four categories described above, Silk manages to straddle three of them: Descriptive, Experiential and Evocative.

Cheerios is one of the best cereal product naming results of all time and follows the same strategy. The name is descriptive, yet has the secondary meaning of a happy greeting. Both names work on multiple levels in the consumer's mind, and are therefore very engaging and tough to beat.

V. Studies in Branding

- A. **Juice Branding** – Simply Orange, Tropicana and POM Wonderful
- B. **Verizon's Tagline** – a positive negative
- C. **Yahoo! Personals: Believe** – a tagline creates brand engagement
- D. **Yellow Freight** – the friction between a color and a name creates engagement

A. Juice Branding

Since Coke owns MinuteMaid and Pepsi owns Tropicana, it's not surprising that the orange juice battle between them is being fought in the same way as their long-standing cola war, which is further identical to the marketing skirmish between Dasani (Coke) and Aquafina (Pepsi) bottled water. Both companies are committed to shadowing each other's moves, resulting in products and brands that are virtually indistinguishable. The dueling carafes below were predictable:



Simply Orange, by MinuteMaid, has a cleaner, more effective label. The messaging on the Tropicana carafe is too busy; watch for it to get cleaned-up and for the illustration of the orange on the label to increase in size. Since MinuteMaid has perhaps half the market share of Tropicana in the non-frozen category, they will be "taking chances" and Tropicana will be reacting.

POM Wonderful

An interesting new player in the juice business is POM. The pomegranate juice is called POM Wonderful after a variety of pomegranates. Other blended varieties are just called POM, but "Wonderful" is carried over throughout the messaging. The packaging is unique, and the sales pitch is anchored in the health benefits of antioxidants. At 26

cents per fluid ounce, POM is 3 to 4 times more expensive than national orange juice brands.



POM is leveraging several points of contact in differentiating its brand. The name "Pom" gives consumers a short and sweet way to get a handle on the rather awkward mouthful, "pomegranate juice." It also helps make the idea of trying it less scary. Don't be surprised if "pom juice" is adopted by the public as shorthand for all pomegranate juice, giving POM a big advantage over their inevitable competitors. POM's tagline, DRINK TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT™, works on two levels: It reinforces the health benefits of the juice and plays off of an emotional idiom.

B. Verizon's Tagline: A Positive Negative

Loud and Clear: Full points to Verizon for redefining and taking ownership of the phrase "Can you hear me now?" Most corporations would have missed this opportunity, arguing that "Can you hear me now" is the question most often muttered in frustration during cell phone calls gone bad. Why run television ads in which a Verizon user asks this highly negative question over and over? Doesn't this portray the Verizon experience in a bad light?

Au contraire, mon ami. The tagline "Can you hear me now?" works for many reasons:

- it's the last thing a consumer expects, so it gets their attention;

- it speaks to the user's experience;
- it's funny, warm and engaging;
- it's been successfully redefined to mean "Hear what we're saying? Another breakthrough from Verizon."

Extra points to Verizon for understanding that a negative can be more positive than a positive (i.e. "The clear alternative to Cellular") when it comes to branding. Minus a few points for having the anemic corporate tagline, "Make progress every day," which is more of an aspiration for someone in physical therapy than a convincing argument in favor of Verizon's service.

C. Tagline: The Dating Game

The Yahoo! Personals new tagline, "Believe," is a masterful example of how to achieve the brass ring of branding: Engagement. A less savvy tagline might have been "Find that special someone you have always dreamed about," but that approach would be far less effective because it:

- is exactly what people would expect to hear and would pass through them like white noise.
- narrowly defines the Yahoo! Personals as merely a service offering.
- tells the audience how to think about it, with no room left for mystery.

"Believe" is a home run for their tagline because it:

- causes people to pause and ask themselves "Believe in what?" and to actively fill in the blanks and personalize the connection, which is the most effective form of engagement.
- elevates the Yahoo! Personals brand above the goods and services they offer and taps into a positive aspirational philosophy.

This same strategy is demonstrated by these taglines: Nike's "Just Do It," Apple's "Think Different," Fannie Mae's "We're in the American Dream Business," or Guidant's "It's a Great Time to Be Alive."

D. Yellow On A Roll



For more than seventy-five years, Yellow Freight Lines has stuck with one of the simplest and most engaging color schemes ever devised. Their trucks and logo are orange, and their logo consists only of the word "Yellow," with no additional information. When you stop and think about it (we all have), that's engagement.

Another shipping company, UPS, is currently promoting its corporate color, brown, as its new nickname: Brown. They are attempting to make a virtue out of a color that doesn't usually generate much enthusiasm by turning it into a virtuous *character*.

Whether UPS' very tricky strategy will work remains to be seen, but Yellow has demonstrated a startlingly simple and effective way to create a little friction with their name, and from that a whole lot of brand engagement.

VI. Case Studies of Igor Naming/Branding Projects

- A. Tickle
- B. Wynn Las Vegas
- C. July
- D. Mosaic
- E. Rivet
- F. Dragon Tag
- G. Seven
- H. Vanilla
- I. Guidant Heartstring
- J. BBC's The Office
- K. Cisco Systems – Fast Track
- L. Whisper

Case studies below:

A. Tickle



Real friends Tickle: Emode, the premier web destination for personality tests and matchmaking, hired us to name their new social network product. The fast emerging and highly competitive social network sector is populated with mostly descriptive names, such as Friendster, Friendspot, people2people, Six Degrees, Zero Degrees, Everyone's Connected, ITSNOTWHATYOUKNOW and Visible Path. Other names include Rhyze and Huminity, which defy rhyme, reason and classification.

As always, we were looking for the one name that worked on as many levels as possible. Further, if the name we produced was well-loved, the plan was to migrate it from a product name to the name for the entire company. So the name had to be able to tie together all aspects of Emode's business, including the seemingly disparate activities of IQ tests and romantic matchmaking. We had to develop a brand name that made sense for intellectual pursuits, dating and social networking. Tickle works for all three: *Tickle you Brain, Tickle your Mate, Real Friends Tickle.*

Beyond the practical considerations, the new name had to be:

- short, evocative, and loaded with meaning (the usual requirements)
- fun, human, memorable, distinctive
- relevant yet non-descriptive
- usable as a verb
- able to capture the attention of the world
- supportive of the company's positioning
- a deep well of marketing/advertising imagery and language going forward
- able to tap into the hearts and minds of their audience in a unique way
- a strong competitive advantage
- a compelling advertisement in and of itself

And of course, on top of all that the name had to be available from both a trademark and a domain name perspective. After carefully considering every possibility in every known language, it became clear that Tickle was the perfect name.

<http://www.tickle.com>

NEWS – May 23, 2004: According to the [Center For Media Research](#), Tickle Matchmaking has become the top online personals destination.

To see the full spectrum of names in this sector, check out the [Social Network Names Taxonomy](#) chart, above, which we created as part of the [competitive analysis](#) phase of this project.

B. Wynn Las Vegas



Our most interesting luxury brand naming job began on a Sunday when we retrieved a voice mail from [Steve Wynn](#), who left two cell phone numbers, a work number and his home phone. Two days later we spent ten hours locked (literally) in the penthouse of the Desert Inn with him – our longest kickoff meeting to date. He was seeking a name for his newest hotel resort casino.

Mr. Wynn was open to using his last name for what would be his finest work, but had several reservations about that strategy. A leading concern was that Donald Trump had done this when naming his casino in Atlantic City. From a branding perspective, it needed to be clear that Mr. Wynn's hotel was in fact a much higher-level experience than Mr. Trump's. At issue was whether the same naming strategy would subliminally convey that the two experiences were in any way similar.

We were convinced that Mr. Wynn should use his last name for the name of the hotel. It became clear that within the resort casino sector, the two last names – Wynn and Trump – conjured very different qualities in the hearts and minds of their audiences.

True to his famous reputation for attention to detail, Steve Wynn had called us in two years in advance of the resort's opening, so there was ample time to work through all of the possibilities and get it right.

During the initial meeting, an agent of Sotheby's had arrived with a multitude of iconic paintings in tow, prompting talk of naming a hotel that was to be a timeless work of art after an existing timeless work of art.

The new name was announced to the press as "Le Reve" ("The Dream"), after a Picasso painting. As the opening of the hotel drew near, the actual name, Wynn Las Vegas, was announced. Which is as it should be: a great work of art, signed by the artist.

<http://www.wynnlasvegas.com>

C. July



Texas Pension Consultants engaged Igor to help them name and brand their new financial services company. The new company will offer business services such as payroll, pension and human resource management to businesses of all sizes.

One of the key positioning points the name had to capture is "the freedom to focus on your core business." The name also needed to be fresh and different, yet fall within the parameters of the types of names associated with the financial services sector. That's right, the name had to be both intuitive *and* interesting, a pretty tall order.

Financial companies are most often identified by names that conjure nature, stability, or longevity. July is much more than the name of the month that Julius Caesar named after himself. It is the one name that covers all the established financial services cues, is fresh and different, and infers -- rather than shouts -- "Freedom," making it infinitely engaging.

The new July company will be launching in March, 2005.

D. Mosaic



Fontana Lithograph/Affiliated Graphics was the name of one of the biggest, most respected and innovative printing shops in the Washington D.C. area. Since 1948 they have been the go-to print production firm on the east coast for clients from around the world.

The strategy behind Fontana's choice of a new name dictated a finely nuanced, pitch-perfect result. The new name's most basic task was to eliminate the distractions inherent in their one company being known by two distinctly different names, Fontana and Affiliated Graphics. Simple enough.

Things got really interesting when the client told us that they wanted to define an entirely new business segment, Corporate Print Collateral Consulting, while retaining their core identity as printers. Also critically important was that the new name not suggest that they were muscling-in on the territory of their client base that includes advertising agencies, branding consultants, and graphic design shops. Further, this family-owned business had recently been passed from the founding generation to the younger one, and it was important not to pick a name that suggested radical change was afoot, given their solid, sixty-year reputation in the printing business.

Corporate Print Collateral Consulting is all about managing and strategizing the printed collateral that a large enterprise produces to establish their image. Mosaic is the one name capable of conveying the idea of arranging many visual pieces into the most effective presentation possible, while at the same time capturing the idea of printing and walking the razor's edge between all of Mosaic's communication concerns.

<http://www.mosaicprint.com>

E. Rivet



Aucent Corporation engaged Igor to rename and reposition their company and to name three new products. Aucent's core business is XBRL business reporting and financial data analysis. XBRL (eXtensible Business Reporting Language) is the new standard to prepare and analyze financial information.

Our client needed a name that would carry three ideas: 1) permanently attaching XBRL tags to financial data; 2) generating a compelling financial picture of a customer's business; and 3) support an interesting animal icon in an engaging way. They did not want a random visual icon a la the Linux penguin or a linear one like the literal animal print patterns Apple uses to market its Panther, Jaguar and Tiger Operating systems.

The company's new name, Rivet, covers all three bases of the brand positioning and more:

1. Strength, reliability, dependability. Old-fashioned stability in an often fluctuating high-tech environment.
2. Construction metaphors, tying things together, building immense structures (or data reports) one rivet (or "nugget" of data) at a time.
3. Great action verb associations, from riveting your attention to riveting the structure and data together.
4. Frog imagery/icon/mascot, the "ribbit" of frogspeak evoking the name Rivet.

While the majority of Rivet's competitors are positioned merely as companies or service providers, Rivet has the potential to become a strong, memorable, and top-of-mind brand. The opportunity here is to build a solid brand, create pathways for brand recognition, and lay the groundwork for brand loyalty. Just by having a well-defined brand, a key differentiator from the competition is already in place. But we have to look to the future as well, when new XBRL-related brands are likely to compete more aggressively for brand attention with Rivet, once Rivet demonstrates to the marketplace - through its name, branding and the quality of its products - the value of a brand.

The first of three new product names we created for Rivet, [Dragon Tag](#), is now available.

<http://www.rivetsoftware.com>

F. Dragon Tag



Dragon Tag is the first of three products named by Igor for [Rivet](#), a company we also named. The Dragon Tag product is software which enables the user to tag financial data with XBRL by clicking and dragging from Excel spreadsheets. Drag and Tag = Dragon Tag.

As with their company name, the client was in the market for a name that inferred a benefit, was memorable, and came complete with an iconic visual.

<http://www.rivetsoftware.com>

G. Seven



SEVEN's patent-pending software, System SEVEN™, allows mobile data and telecommunications operators worldwide the ability to offer subscribers secure, real-time access to email and corporate applications via any mobile device.

It was clear early in the process that a descriptive name ("...Wireless") or a dot-com-ish invention would not work to position this company above and beyond the pack in the crowded telecommunications sector; indeed, only a clear, bold, evocative name, instantly recognizable and loaded with layers of meaning, would suffice. SEVEN emerged as the perfect name.

We worked directly with SEVEN's founder and CEO, Bill Nguyen, who explained the appeal of the name we created in The New York Times Sunday Magazine:

Seven's abstract, slightly mystical quality, Nguyen reasoned, was the essence of its appeal. "It has so many different connotations," he says. "Seven Wonders of the World, seven days of the week, on the seventh day God rested. It's the number of perfection, the good-luck number. There's also a data language in the telecom industry called SS7, which the companies we deal with will appreciate."

System SEVEN is available today from the following mobile operators worldwide:

- Cingular Xpress Mail Network Edition
- Globe Telecom MobileMail
- KDDI Keitai Office
- NTT DoCoMo BINWAN
- O2 xmail
- Optus MobileMail
- Orange Office Freedom
- Sprint PCS Business Connection
Personal Edition & Enterprise Edition
- SingTel MobilMail

Seven: <http://www.seven.com>

News: [SEVEN Wins Network Magazine's 2003 Product of the Year Award](#)

H. Vanilla



Just Plain Better. When we were hired to create a name for a new accounting firm, we were fortunate to have a client with a unique story to tell. A recent Rockefeller Corporation study which asked, "Why do customers leave their accountants?," revealed great dissatisfaction with this industry among consumers:

- 68% - The customer believes you don't care about them.
- 14% - The customer is dissatisfied with the service.
- 9% - The customer is lost to a competitor.
- 5% - The customer has a friend who provides the service.
- 3% - The customer moves away.
- 1% - The customer dies.

Notice that "price" and "quality" are absent from the results; customers made decisions on what accounting firm to hire based predominately on how they were treated (i.e. service). This new company wanted to change all that, to create a new kind of accounting experience for small to medium-sized companies that threw out the old rules, such as the dreaded "billable hour," and focused on customer service and satisfaction. Their plan to do this included having fixed monthly prices for varying levels of service, so their customers would never be surprised by their bill; unlimited support, so customers could contact them any time by phone, email or in person to discuss their account without ever paying a penny extra for it; and finally offering a superior online accounting experience that gives customers and their accountants 24/7 access to the customer's account, so businesses would be better able to make intelligent financial decisions because they would always have the latest financial numbers at their fingertips.

The challenge for Igor was to create a name for a brand new kind of accounting experience, a name that's as distinctive within the accounting and business service industries as the company's business model is. As the brand positioning developed, we realized that the company needed a great name that not only worked on many levels, but also one that was warm, human, sensual and evocative, all the better to counter the prevailing names in the accounting industry. The bulk of [names in the industry](#) are cold, calculating, inhuman, remote, mechanical, stodgy, soulless and devoid of charm.

Our client also wanted a confrontationally quiet name, a name that was a self-effacing statement about the personality of accountants, yet elegant and dignified at the same time. We found the perfect name in Vanilla, which demonstrates the above brand attributes so that the company never has to explain them.

For the Vanilla project, we also developed the company's website, adopting the clean, spare design of our own site to reinforce the elegant simplicity of the Vanilla accounting model. This phase of the project included implementing the sophisticated [Movable Type](#) blogging software, allowing the company to post topical accounting news and insights in a variety of categories, positioning the firm to become synonymous with "[The Accounting Blog](#)" and own the conversation within the accounting industry.

Keep your eye on Vanilla -- this is a company with a great story to tell, and soon the accounting industry will be playing catch-up, scrambling to deal with a unique new name, brand proposition, and business model that in May 2004 infiltrated an industry that has been fiercely resistant to change, for the benefit of customers who have had to put up with tired old business practices for far too long simply because "that's the way it's always been done." Well, no longer. Vanilla - just plain better.

<http://www.vanilla-accounting.com>

To see the full spectrum of names in this sector, check out the [Accounting and Business Services](#) name taxonomy chart, above, which we created as part of the [competitive analysis](#) phase of this project.

I. Guidant – Heartstring



Historically, every business sector begins life with a tightly-drawn nomenclature box, departure from which is seen as foolhardy. Eventually, however, a company ventures outside of the comfort zone, is hugely rewarded, and the rest follow. Well-known examples of industry-changing company names include Virgin (Airline industry), Fannie Mae (Financial), Apple (Computers/Technology) and Yahoo (Web). The breakout usually happens when the messaging gets stale and ineffectual and/or when negative baggage in an industry reaches critical mass.

The medical / biotech / pharmaceutical space is one of the last holdouts, but two sides of the triangle have recently given way.

Medical Devices Break Out

A couple of years ago the medical device manufacturer Medtronic introduced a vacuum cardiac stabilizer called "[Octopus](#)," an evocative, intuitive name that referenced the arms and suction elements of the device. The announcement of the name brought laughter and derisive comments from competitors in the industry. At the time, Guidant's

competitive product was called "Axius," a typical Greek/Latinate morphemic-constructed name common to surgical equipment.

The Octopus name began showing up in lectures and in quotes from surgeons in articles, even when the Guidant Axius was the product being referenced. In just a few short years, Octopus has become the default name for all similar cardiac stabilizers, much like FedEx, Kleenex, Xerox, etc. became synonymous with their products. Without employing a huge marketing budget, Medtronic captured the hearts and minds of their target audience and made it impossible for anyone to steal them back, no matter how many advertising dollars were thrown at the problem. The long-standing wisdom (fear) that a surgical device needed a "serious sounding" name to appeal to surgeons had been laid to waste. Medtronic has proven that, contrary to popular belief, surgeons are human. Shocking.

Guidant was not only determined not to let this happen again, they wanted a name that would be a category-killer for the new product they were soon to release. Our assignment was to come up with a name that would achieve common, default usage. A name that would, pardon the pun, spread virally. And thus "[Heartstring](#)" was born, and did just that.

The Heartstring is a coiled string that is used in place of a clamp when making a graft to the aorta during heart surgery. Besides being descriptive, we chose Heartstring because it has a secondary emotional context, and because when the procedure is complete the surgeon simply "tugs on the Heartstring" to uncoil and remove it from the aorta. Since the name had three points of connectivity with the audience, we knew the chances were great of it attaining the Holy Grail of default usage. And indeed it has.

Biopharma Heals Thyself

The second leg of the triangle, [Biotech / Pharmaceutical company names](#), began to quiver recently with the advent of names like Guava, Nektar, Blue Heron, Cypress and Orchid. These companies are using their names to distance themselves from the negative baggage that exists in their industry in the same way that Merck and ADM are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to assure the public that they are not cold and uncaring, and are working with nature rather than against it, a la Frankenfood.

It's only a matter of time until the names of drugs begin to reflect the understanding that the right name can be a cost-effective, market dominating force.

While names like Prozac and Vicadin are interchangeable, as are Claritin and Zolof, other names like Viagra and Wellbutrin have begun to shift the trend with abstractly inferential benefit imagery. Look for this trend to accelerate as every combination of "X" and "Z" names saturate the marketplace with sound-alike morphemic mouthfuls.

<http://www.guidant.com/products/ProductTemplates/CS/heartstring.shtml>

J. BBC's 'The Office'



One of the funniest shows on television is [The Office](#). It originated on the BBC in England, but is now available in the states on [BBC America](#). This is not the watered-down, focus-grouped dry heave that you've come to expect out of Burbank. The Office is a faux documentary depicting life in the office of Wernham Hogg paper supply merchants, situated in the small town of Slough near London.

We created a viral marketing campaign to increase the brand awareness of this Golden Globe nominated TV show around the world. Using a combination of search engine positioning and getting influential bloggers to write about the show and link to it, we helped put The Office on the map in the United States in advance of the 2004 Golden Globe Awards.

The show went on to win both of the Golden Globes it was nominated for.

http://www.bbcamerica.com/genre/comedy_games/the_office/the_office.jsp

K. Cisco Systems – Fast Track



Cisco Systems needed a name for a product they describe as "Your shortcut through the IP Communications decision-making process."

This web-based product takes prospective clients through a streamlined decision making process that helps them assess their business and technical needs, chose a solution provider, and build a case to sell the plan to corporate decision-makers.

The name to needed convey ease of use and infer the success of the user. The Igor-supplied product name, "Fast Track" elegantly accomplished both objectives.

You can take the Fast Track ride here:

<http://www.cisco.com/offer/powernow/ca/fasttrack/ipcomm/>

L. Whisper

Whisper

When we were asked to name a new brand and business strategy agency, it gave us a chance to relive to some extent the existential horror of when we named ourselves. In addition to the usual struggles with getting the positioning pitch perfect and creating the ideal evocative name, the advertising and marketing industry is so large and so widespread that what we call the "meathook reality" of trademark availability is especially vexing.

Positioning, positioning, positioning

A naming project is really a positioning project – first develop the brand positioning, then name that positioning. In this case, the client zeroed-in on a thought from a [recent post on our Snark Hunting blog](#) that read, "The key to any effective naming, marketing or branding effort is to change and take ownership of the conversation." Since branding is about demonstrating ideas and advertising is about explaining them, they wanted a name that *demonstrated* rather than explained their core concept. And because it had to be about taking ownership of a conversation, we really had no choice but to name the company Whisper.

When you shout, people tune you out. In a culture saturated with messages being screamed at consumers from every direction, employing superlatives like "best", "number one", "superior", "leading", "favorite", "America's favorite", "great", and so on, it's no wonder that people have evolved highly sensitive and effective BS indicators. When you whisper, on the other hand, people are forced to pay attention, to lean forward, to become engaged. To whisper is to exchange valuable, privileged information, to communicate emotionally AND strategically, and to make yourself heard without beating your chest and yelling yourself hoarse.

We don't think there's a better name out there for a branding, marketing or advertising agency. At Igor, we've created a process to ensure that, whatever the industry, we'll know where to look for powerful names like Whisper. And more importantly, we'll know *what* to look for.

Whisper Brand Strategy Consultants: <http://www.whisperbrand.com/> . Also, check out the Whisper Brand Strategy Blog: <http://www.whisperbrand.com/blog/>