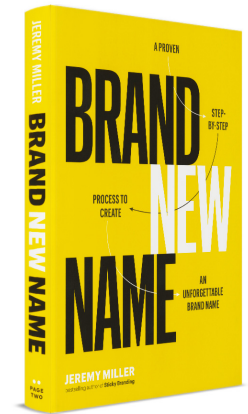


# Brand New Name

A Proven, Step-by-Step Process to Create an Unforgettable Brand Name

by **Jeremy Miller**



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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Many companies spend so much time developing the identity of their brand, but they neglect or undervalue the single most important and central aspect of that identity—their brand name. Too many entrepreneurs and businesses believe that their name is just an afterthought, something that will become iconic simply because their business becomes successful.

But great businesses and brands have names that are perfectly in-line with what they create or the services they offer—and a whole lot more. They're memorable, unique, and roll off the tongue. What could be a better marketing tool for your company? With that in mind, *Brand New Name* outlines a total process for executing a naming sprint for your brand, while also identifying key naming strategies that separate truly great brand names from instantly forgettable ones. By examining some of the world's biggest and most successful brands, this book helps brands everywhere who aspire to join their ranks.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The importance of a name, and why the naming process is deserving of your attention.
- How to identify what will make your brand name truly great and set you apart from the competition.
- How to plan and execute a successful name creating sprint that will result in the perfect name for your brand.

## Making Your Brand Unforgettable

Choosing a brand name is one of the most important business decisions you will make for your company. A brilliant name defines your brand, and it can shape the future of your business. Every entrepreneur, business owner, and marketer has to name something at least once.

Naming is one of the most fundamental building blocks of how we communicate and understand the world around us. But the process of naming can be awful, time-consuming, and frustrating work. Every time you think you've found a great name, you discover it's already taken. In fact, as a representation of this issue, every single one of the 456,976 four-letter combinations possible have been claimed as domain names, from aaaa.com to zzzz.com and everything in-between.

When it comes to naming your brand, the truth is that there are no bad names, just bad strategies. Some branding experts argue that misspelling a brand name is a cardinal sin. But names like Flickr have become absolutely iconic.

The truth is that successful businesses create successful brands, and never the other way around. And the name of a brand is the longest living artifact of that brand. That means that it requires much more thought than just going with whatever is the first thing that comes to mind, or whatever happens to be available. In just a word or two, you are capturing the essence of your company, product, or idea. It's a simple phrase that's absolutely packed with meaning.

One of the reasons that brand naming is so hard is that most people don't have the right tools or processes to do it effectively. But the power to create a great name is hiding in the power of your team. When you combine a talented team with a defined, strategic naming process, your brand's name will be on its way to becoming an icon and a powerful representation of what your brand and business represent.

### Names Are Strategic

By choosing a brand name, you are choosing the story you want to share. A great name evokes emotions and positions the brand, two important elements of marketing and establishing your brand identity.

Your name will set expectations, shaping your brand's personality and the relationship it will form with customers, staff, partners, and anyone it touches. The best kind of brand positioning, including your brand name, addresses three key questions:

- Where will you play?
- How will you win?
- How will you be known?

By clearly answering each question, you'll be making decisions that will shape your business strategy. You're deciding what your brand will be and what it won't be. Every successful company has a name that means something different, because each company has a different story to share.

With that in mind, it's important to avoid referring to your business as a 'one-stop shop' or other related phrases. This suggests a broad identity, one that can't be pinpointed and as a result isn't memorable or unique. When it comes to your naming strategy, the most important part of that strategy is to have one. Without a strategy, you'll end up compromising on the quality and elements of your name.

## The Anatomy of a Name

Naming is creativity under constraint. You're telling a story in a word or two. Names come from many surprising places. Some are real words, while others are invented. You're looking for words or phrases that can tell a story—for example, 'nachos' are actually named after their owner.

Brand names tend to be grouped into one of three categories:

- **Descriptive names:** the name indicates what the product, service, or idea is
- **Suggestive names:** the name indicates what the item is like, a sort of nod to what you might get or experience
- **Abstract names:** the name is an empty vessel, and the brand will breathe life into it to make the word its own
- When it comes to the construction of names, that category is a bit broader. Brand names tend to originate or be formed in one of five ways:
  - **Real words:** the word already exists in English or another language. It could be a noun or verb, or a word taken from history or literature, like Starbucks
  - **Constructed words:** this is when you take parts of real words and push them together to create a new word, like Instagram
  - **Invented words:** you can invent a word that is completely distinct for your brand, like Accenture
  - **Acronyms:** acronyms use the first letters of a phrase,

often from a descriptive name, to create a quick reference to the brand—like IBM (International Business Machines)

- Misspelled words: drop a vowel or change a consonant, and you can turn common words into names that represent your brand, like Chick-fil-A

Understanding the anatomy of a name will give you an advantage in the naming process, because it can expand your horizons. By understanding all the possibilities, you can be more creative and look for names more broadly.

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### The Persuasive Power of Words

The way a name sounds, or the way it rolls off your tongue, can shape the story of your brand. The way that name sounds begins the story. It helps to position the brand in the consumer's mind, and it indicates what to expect.

#### Sounds Convey Meaning

Sounds are the root of language, which influences how we understand words. Words like 'dawdle' or 'meander' sound slow, whereas 'swift' or 'sprint' sound fast. The way words come off your tongue conveys meaning. A dawdling old man creates a descriptive image in your mind, whereas Usain Bolt, the world's fastest man, just sounds like he was born to be fast.

When you're brainstorming ideas for your brand name, say the words out loud. When you're testing ideas, say the words out loud. Names are primarily used in verbal communication. You ask for a brand by name, and you even think in sounds. How a word sounds will shape its persuasive power.

#### Words Paint a Picture

Names can persuade when they create a mental image. Recall how the term 'black hole' changed an entire field of study. In two words, black hole paints a visual metaphor of a complex, abstract area of physics.

Memorable names are often based on 'concrete words.' These are words or phrases that stimulate visual images in your mind. This makes them easier to understand and remember than abstract or puffy words like 'innovative,' 'revolutionary,' and 'world-class.' Concrete words are more memorable because they create a visual image.

#### Simple Names Are More Successful

Margaret Molloy, chief marketing officer at Siegel + Gale,

says, "The greatest brands make life simple. Think Google, Amazon, or even Dunkin' Donuts. They cut through the clutter by delivering what consumers want, when they want it, without hassle."

In a noisy world, simple brands win. This applies to names, too. Researchers have discovered that companies with simple abbreviated stock ticker names achieve a higher boost in stock price than companies with unpronounceable ticker names. We all still buy products with complex names, but in a world of immense competition, every little advantage you achieve can make a difference. When possible, go simple.

#### Embrace Quirks

Finally, don't shy away from quirky names. They give you an opportunity to stand out amongst all of the others.

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### Unlock Your Creative Genius

Everyone is creative, provided they're given structure, and nobody knows your business better than you. Every organization has an immense source of creative talent within their own doors, so you should use that talent in order to create your brand's name and identity. Pull together a team to generate even more ideas.

Teams generate more breakthrough ideas for two reasons—first, volume leads to originality. The more naming ideas you can generate, the more likely you'll find one name that is truly brilliant.

Second, ideas build off other ideas. It's the process of molding, pushing, and adding an idea that makes it transformative. A core benefit of working with a team is that you get to feed on the creativity and ideas of your colleagues. One idea can lead to another, and that takes you down a different path, and then two random ideas collide, and eventually you land on something truly original. With a team, you benefit from a multiplier effect. By getting more people involved, you have an opportunity to generate hundreds, if not thousands, of potentially great names. Plus, employees can identify stories that an outsider might not see. That's why it's recommended to remain in-house when choosing a name for your brand. With well-placed questions and exercises, good names naturally rise to the top.

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### Let's Get Naming

The Brand New Name naming process involves three core steps—Plan, Sprint, and Select. It sounds pretty simple, and

that's because it is. Naming isn't a magic art or a secretive, high-stakes activity. It's a process, and that's what makes the Brand New Name strategy so effective. With clear exercises, daily quotas, and a structured timeline, you and your team will never feel lost or struggle over what to do next.

The Brand New Name process is designed to take place over four weeks. The first week is for planning, the second for the naming sprint, and the 3rd and 4th weeks are for the selection process. Each stage of this process is essential and will help you and your business end up with an excellent brand name that will serve as the first point of communication for your brand and its ideas for (hopefully) decades to come.

### Stage 1: Plan

In the planning stage, you and your teams must develop a naming strategy that works for you. No one but you can tell you exactly what this strategy should entail. Consider the different approaches to naming already discussed, and determine which one (or combination of many) is right for you. Then, you need to assemble your sprint team and assign roles. This could be as simple as requesting that each team member come up with a list of 25 names, or more complicated with specific teams assigned to specific naming tasks. Then, you should review and refine your strategy with your sprint team.

Finally, it's time to prepare the sprint team and organization for the sprint. Ensure that everyone involved has enough time to set aside for the naming sprint that it won't be pushed aside or forgotten. This is particularly important when it comes to brands that are already in operation and serving customers—high-level thinking like that involved with naming a brand can often be brushed aside in service of day-to-day tasks. Don't let this happen.

### Stage 2: Sprint

Now it's time for the sprint itself. Whatever your strategy for your sprint, now is the time to implement it. This sprint should take one work week, or 5 days total. This short time frame will help ensure that people stay focused, vibrant, and creative. Long-lasting sprints aren't sprints at all, they're marathons, and they'll lead to mental burnout and fading creativity.

### Stage 3: Select

At the end of your sprint, you should now have a long list of potential names to consider. Now comes the real process. You should begin by eliminating any non-starters, names that are obviously unfit for any number of reasons (they already exist, they're too hard to spell, they're inappropriate or offensive, etc). Once you've made your shortlist, you may want to send it to a trademark lawyer to validate availability.

Next, it's time to do some testing. Try placing the name in context of a logo, and in simple fonts like Helvetica. Then it's time to do some selection of the best of the best, and test how memorable they are. Can they be quickly recalled?

Finally, you have hopefully narrowed down your list to the best of the best—and it's time to select your name. Once you've made your selection, make sure to celebrate what you've accomplished!



Jeremy Miller is a brand strategist and bestselling author. His blend of humor, stories, and actionable ideas will inspire you to innovate and grow your business and brand. After watching his family's business nearly hit rock bottom, he was forced to take a hard look at the way the company was run and at their industry as a whole. Jeremy realized it wasn't his sales people or marketing processes that were failing, it was the brand: their customers couldn't distinguish them from anyone else. This insight caused him to rethink, reposition, and rebrand the business. The strategy worked, and within a year the company turned the corner and rocketed into growth mode.

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