

If you've ever named a baby, you know how difficult finding just the right name can be, after all, that baby will be stuck with the one you pick. No pressure. In our family, we have to pass all of the names we are considering for a baby through my husband's brother, who then tries to come up with every possible nickname the kids at school could tease him/her with. Whichever names have the least possibilities stay on the list.

NAMING YOUR COMPANY CAN BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT

because the name of your brand needs to do more for your business than just be what people call you. In Naming for Power, Naseem Javed says, "In today's competitive world, a name must function as a total messenger." Think about that. Wow. A total messenger for your brand. That is a big job for one or two words. It's an understatement that those one or two words need to be chosen carefully. Oftentimes, our naming lists can get into the hundreds before we find a name that passes all of the following tests.

In fact,

6 THINGS NEED TO GO INTO THE CONSIDERATION OF THE NAME OF YOUR BRAND.

#1 MEMORABLE

First and foremost, if people can't remember, pronounce, or spell your name, it will take a lot more advertising dollars to get people to remember it. It also needs to be distinctive and stand out from the competition. Make a list of the names of your competitors so you can compare your name options to those that are already in the marketplace.

#2 MEANINGFUL

Your name needs to support the positioning of your brand and speak to the nature of your company. In other words, it needs to communicate to your customers who you are, what you do, and how you are different from all of the other companies that do what you do. We recommend that you do a thorough job of creating your brand BEFORE deciding on a name, so that you can ensure that the name does support the brand positioning instead of working backwards to create a brand that supports your name.

Al Ries & Jack Trout, authors of Positioning, say "The name is the hook that hangs the brand on the product ladder in the prospect's mind. In the positioning era, the single most important marketing decision you can make is what to name the product."

#3 STRETCHY

Like a good pair of yoga pants, your name needs to allow room for your business to grow. Does your brand name put your business in a position where it can change, build brand extensions, add new products or services and the name still make sense? The name you choose will need to be sustainable over time.

#4 POSITIVE

It's a good idea to make sure your name doesn't unintentionally infer negative connotations. One thing to keep in mind, is that if your brand intends to do business internationally, also do a check to make sure the name doesn't possess negative connotations in other languages. For example in the 1950s and 60s, there was a Swedish car magazine named "Fart", which in Swedish translates to "speed". You can probably see how this name would be embarrassing in a global setting. Here is a fun article with more branding blunders. The most prevalent languages are English, Spanish, Russian, Japanese, Indonesian, Arabic, Bengali, Hindustani and Mandarin.

#5 PROTECTABLE

Your name is the most important part of your brand, and needs to be defensible. Finding a name that is legally protectable is becoming more and more difficult. You can perform a business name search through your state's website and also a nationwide Trademark search through TESS. Make sure that it can be owned and trademarked and that the domain is available. Here is a great article that goes more into depth on deciding whether or not you need a trademark.

As far as your domain goes, most likely the .com will not be available or it will be for sale for a lot of money. We counsel people to get creative with their domain names by using a tagline or adding some descriptive words to it. If your company name is Lightning, and lightning.com is taken, you could do lightningstrikes.com or lightningstorm.com, or some other words that are associated with your business. In our case, rightthink.com was taken, so we opted for adding a hyphen like this: right-think.com.

Make sure you visit the sites that are using similar names as you and check to see that their products/services are different enough from yours so as to not confuse visitors who are looking for your site.

#6 VISUAL

Does the name conjure up some delectable concepts that can influence the art of the brand? The graphic elements of your brand will be much more memorable to others, if your name can play into them.

To get you started on your brainstorming, here are some ideas to turn to for inspiration:

Language
Meaning
Personality
Dictionaries
Thesauruses
Latin
Greek
Foreign Language
Mass Culture

Poetry
TV
Music
History
Art
Commerce
Colors
Symbols
Metaphors

Analogies
Sounds
Science
Technology
Astronomy
Myths
Stories
Values
Dream

Have fun and good luck with naming your company!
Let us know what you came up with!