

catchword



How Creating a Company Name is
Different from Creating a Product Name

www.catchwordbranding.com

People often ask how naming a company is different from naming a product. While the process is effectively the same (with a few minor variations, outlined in this document), the experience is often quite distinct. We thought we would take a few minutes to explain our view on the ways creating a new brand name for a company is different from creating a new brand name for a product (or a service brand, feature brand, suite brand, platform brand, etc.).

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Every Catchword brand name development project involves three basic phases of work - **Naming Strategy**, **Name Creation**, and **Name Screening**. However, because of the inherent differences between product and corporate naming assignments, our process varies slightly.

product naming

- ▶ project led by product marketing or new product development teams (little or no c-level involvement)
- ▶ well-defined product positioning leads to narrower field of naming options
- ▶ shorter life-cycle leads to names that are more specific (vs. flexible)
- ▶ .com domain name rarely required
- ▶ more commonly tested for ease of pronunciation and possible negative meaning in an array of languages

company naming

- ▶ project led by senior executives, often including ceo and board
- ▶ uncertainty of product focus leads to wide field of naming options
- ▶ extremely long life-cycle favors names that offer maximum flexibility (over specificity)
- ▶ .com domain usually required (or at least strongly desired)
- ▶ less demand for global linguistic analysis

As any naming consultant will tell you, it's not just about finding names that are available. Long before any trademark assessment or naming research is done, new names must first resonate with the client. Finding a product name that "jumps off the page" is easier than finding a company name that does so.

product naming

- ▶ client team often less personally invested in name selection
- ▶ narrower creative focus allows for more objective assessment; product names are generally more descriptive or strongly suggestive of a key function or benefit
- ▶ if .com domain is not required, screening process knocks out fewer names
- ▶ corporate brand name eases the role the product name has to play (shares the load)

company naming

- ▶ often a name *change* instead of a *new* name; emotional inertia from existing names can be hard to redirect
- ▶ when you have equity in the company, you tend to care more about the name
- ▶ broader creative focus (to accommodate potential shifts in direction) often leads to more abstract or coined names; this style of naming rarely "jumps off the page"
- ▶ need for exact .com domain can severely reduce quantity of available names
- ▶ in early-stage, corporate name carries all the weight; no "supporting cast"

Naming styles are different for company names and product names. Company names tend to be more abstract, and are often coined to free up the .com domain. Product names can be more specific, and are often real words or compound words. Here are a few samples from Catchword's portfolio ...

product naming

Corning ClearCurve
(bendable fiber optic cable)

Dockers StainDefender
(stain-repellant fabric)

Pampers First Steps
(toddler diapers)

Wells Fargo vSafe
(virtual safety deposit box)

company naming

Vudu
(movie downloading company)

Flybridge
(venture capital firm)

Daptiv
(collaboration software company)

Tealeaf
(web application management company)

learn more

Catchword has created dozens of company names and product names for big companies and small. Please feel free to contact us if you would like more information about how we might work with you to create the next great brand name. We look forward to hearing from you.



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