

## Catchword Quarterly October 2005 - Issue No. 16

In this issue, we're delighted to feature a guest column on start-up PR from Jennifer James, Director of Marketing and Communications for Alta Partners. Our brand advice column explains some of the phonetic challenges facing many new brands. And we take a first glance at Viiv, the next mega-brand from Intel. Enjoy!

— The Catchword Team

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### The Name Game

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See if you can guess the famous brand name from these five clues. When you think you've got it, check out the answer at the bottom of this newsletter, or through our web site at <http://www.catchwordbranding.com/games.html#answer17>.

1. Start with a baked-goods container
2. Add a few procrastinating Yalies
3. Mix with the ultimate tool
4. Voila "The Pluto Platter"
5. And a canine catch

For more Name Games, visit <http://www.catchwordbranding.com/games.html>.

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## Catchword Announces

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### **prInteract**

Xerox approached Catchword with the challenge of creating a name for their remote services for commercial printing presses, designed to optimize uptime and profit. Locally installed software allows each machine to "push" data about itself to Xerox for observation and analysis, improving customer satisfaction and performance across the entire value chain. From "printer," "interact," and "act," prInteract conveys a unique combination of technology and human interaction.

### **Mom's Best**

With the introduction of Mom's Best instant oatmeal, Malt-O-Meal continues its tradition of tasty breakfast cereals – something they've been doing since 1919. Catchword's name reflects an emphasis on quality and value, with a homey feel that says any mom would be proud to serve this as a good start to the day. Did you notice the subtle tie back to the parent company?

### **Information & Decision Solutions**

The integration of P&G's IT department and Global Business Services required a new name that would accurately reflect the wide variety of solutions the new group would provide. Catchword helped identify the new group's unique assets and deliverables. Our name Information & Decision Solutions highlights the new department's strategy: leveraging information to drive better decisions.

### **Idiocracy**

Written and directed by Mike Judge ("Office Space"), Idiocracy follows an average guy (Luke Wilson) who volunteers to be the subject of a hibernation experiment that goes awry. Wilson wakes up to find he's the smartest person around, and the fun begins. Catchword assisted 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox in developing the name Idiocracy, which comes from the words "idiot" and Greek *kratia* ("to rule") to convey the concept of a government run by ... er ... under-achievers. Art imitating reality?

### **Key2**

Exagen Diagnostics is the leader in an emerging class of genomic marker prognostic tests that help predict disease progression. Catchword created Key2 for Exagen's breast cancer prognostic technology to convey a next-generation market and a "key to" success. The Key2 technology platform provides more accurate and cost-effective results than other technologies on the market.

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## Guest Column: PR for Early Stage Companies

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By Jennifer James, Director of Marketing and Communications, Alta Partners

Public relations is one of the most powerful tools in any company's marketing arsenal. A well-planned and executed PR effort can help a young start-up gain industry recognition, position itself against the competition and strengthen its customer base. And dollar for dollar, public relations can drive measurable results at a fraction of even a conservative advertising campaign.

PR doesn't have to eat up your entire marketing budget, nor does it require a fancy marquee firm to be successful. In fact, before you hire a PR professional, there are many things companies can do in-house to make the most of working with the media.

First, know what you want to achieve. Understanding and agreeing upon the desired outcome is critical in designing your communications plan. Do you hope to attract more customers, recruit talented employees to your firm, or grease the wheels for another round of fundraising? "PR for PR's sake" is usually a waste of time and money – something start-ups never have in abundance. Know why and where you want the coverage.

Second, think about your audience – what they read and what types of messages will resonate with them. What facts or examples can you leverage to tell a compelling story? Featuring your customers gives validity to the message and a connection to your audience. Case studies can benefit both you and your clients and are far more interesting to the media.

Third, get to know the reporters that cover your industry. Take the time to actually read what they write regularly. If a journalist writes something you like, or an article you think missed the mark, send him an e-mail and tell him why. This is an effective way to develop relationships with the press – and they would rather hear from you than your PR rep anyway. Offer some insight or information based on your experience and point out the trends that are driving your business environment.

Finally, don't assume you need a big name firm to get great results. Find a communications specialist or small firm that knows your space and the reporters and publications you want to reach. Be specific in outlining your goals and how the PR campaign will be evaluated and stay engaged in the process. Stay focused and you'll get the results that can help your company reach your business goals.

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Jennifer James is the Director of Marketing and Communications at Alta Partners, a San Francisco-based venture capital firm focused on early and later stage life sciences and information technology companies ([www.altapartners.com](http://www.altapartners.com)). She was formerly a Vice President at Blanc & Otus, a public relations firm.

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### **Namesake: Rice Wine Branding**

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By Burt Alper, Principal

When we founded Catchword, we struggled with what we would call our new company. After putting ourselves through the same rigorous process we now subject our clients to, we settled on a short list of finalists. One of those names still stands out in my memory: Namesake. It was ultimately rejected because all three of the founders kept jokingly pronouncing it "Nam-eh-SAHK-ay" (instead of the desired "NAYM-saik"). It became a running gag.

A few years later, I chuckled when I saw the new name for Palm printed in The New York Times as “palmone”. I couldn’t help but think of it as “palm-OHN-ay”. A short while later, I saw Experts Exchange, an online collaboration network, which launched using the domain “expertsexchange.com”. It only takes a moment to misread that as “expert sex change”! How does one avoid these awkward and embarrassing mispronunciations?

The secret lies in understanding the phonetic rules of English. The stress pattern changes with the number of syllables in the word. If the brain misinterprets the number of syllables, it will subsequently misinterpret the appropriate stress pattern. This is made worse when there is confusion about where one word begins and another ends, as in a domain name, when there are no spaces or intercap letters. And once you start reading a word the wrong way, it’s almost impossible to go back to the right way. No one at Catchword can see “namesake” as “someone who has the same name” anymore.

Since this misinterpretation of stress patterns is unpredictable, the only way to avoid the rice wine branding company is to subject name candidates to a linguistic test. When conducting this test, it is imperative that respondents are not offered any cues for how to pronounce the name. Remember: when your brand is printed in The New York Times, they don’t include the logo or wordmark. Test the name in all caps, or all lower case (as it would be in a domain name), to gauge the importance of an intercap letter. And always test the name with an equal mix of native English speakers and non-native English speakers to see how accents affect pronunciation and perception.

Rice wine, anyone?

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### **There’s A Name For It**

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This section features words from various languages that capture universal, but complicated, human emotions or situations. We welcome your contributions!

**Wabi** (Japanese, rhymes with “bobby”) — A flawed detail that creates an elegant whole. An imperfection which gives an object distinctiveness and character. “That pot has wabi.”

**Fusto** (Italian, FOOSE-toe) — A man who likes to flex his muscles and dress provocatively. The type of fellow who unbuttons his shirt down to his navel and sports eight gold chains.

**Weltschmerz** (German, VELT-shmairtz, literally “world grief”) — A gloomy, romanticized world-weary sadness, experienced most often by privileged youth. The idea that languid sorrow and ultimate self-destruction are romantic.

Source: “They Have a Word for It” by Howard Rheingold.

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## **Gimmie Viiv!**

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By Burt Alper, Principal, and Aaron Hall, Project Manager

Intel's latest chip, Viiv (pronounced "vive"), was introduced this summer. On the surface, the name plays on the common English words "vie" and "vibe", and of course the Latin root "vive" (life). The official statement is that name is supposed to communicate "excitement, vibrancy, and vividness," all relevant points for the lifestyle brand Intel envisions. Pretty clever to fit all that into four letters and one syllable.

Of course, the rumors are flying about all the possible innuendoes of the name. The best we've heard so far is that the letters "VI" and "IV" make a rough Roman approximation of "64", subtly referencing the 64-bit architecture on which these chips are based. Of course, the correct way to write 64 in Roman numerals would be LXIV (just try to pronounce \*that\* one). We've since learned that Viiv will be used on 32-bit machines as well, so consider that rumor debunked.

Regardless of the spelling awkwardness, it appears that Intel is set to spend roughly the same amount they spent on Centrino (~\$300M) to promote the brand. That's \$75 million per letter. With that kind of money behind it, consumers won't have to deduce much – the Viiv messaging will be branded indelibly in their minds through sheer ad-force.

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## **Potent Quotables**

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"Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow."  
Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Man is a creature who lives not upon bread alone, but primarily by catchwords."  
Robert Louis Stevenson

"Our major obligation is not to mistake slogans for solutions."  
Edward R. Murrow

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## **Linguistics In Action: Backronym**

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A word re-interpreted as an acronym. In a backronym, an expansion is invented to treat an existing word as an acronym. An example is Yahoo!, now said to stand for "Yet Another Hierarchical Official Oracle", but founders David Filo and Jerry Yang insist they selected the name because they liked the general definition of a yahoo: "rude, unsophisticated, uncouth". Often, backronyms serve a useful purpose as mnemonics. [Compound of back + acronym]

For more Linguistics In Action, please visit our Naming Glossary, located at <http://www.catchwordbranding.com/glossary.html>.

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**The Name Game Answer: Frisbee**

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William Russell Frisbie managed a small bakery in Connecticut in the late 1800s. His pies were extremely popular, and soon he established the Frisbie Pie Company. Before long, he discovered that the pie tins' lids had an aerodynamic quality that allowed them to glide through the air (clue #1).

In the 1920s, Frisbie pies were especially popular at nearby Yale University. Dorms were filled with the empty tins, which undergraduate procrastinators enjoyed sailing through the air (clue #2). Since the tins were made of metal and therefore potentially dangerous, the students would yell "Frisbie" to alert the recipient of the incoming tin.

Wham-O toy company started manufacturing plastic disks in the late 1950s and initially called them Pluto Platters to avoid trademark issues surrounding the Frisbie Pie Company (clue #4). After the pie company went out of business, Wham-O reverted back to calling the disks "Frisbees" (with a slightly altered spelling).

In the 1960s, the game of Ultimate sprouted up on many college campuses (clue #3). The game, based loosely on American football, uses Frisbees in a fast-paced contest between two teams of seven. And of course, man's best friend is famous for leaping high in the air to catch a soaring Frisbee (clue #5).

Source: "From Altoids to Zima" by Evan Morris.

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If you wish to unsubscribe, please email us at [info@catchwordbranding.com](mailto:info@catchwordbranding.com).

Thanks for reading! We'll be back next quarter with another issue.