THE ESSENTIAL NAMING GUIDE

The Art *of* Naming

SIXTH EDITION

LOVINGLY PREPARED BY ZINZIN

The Essential Naming Guide

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The Art of Naming

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Let There Be Names.

T.S. Eliot wrote that the world will end with a whimper, not a bang. Perhaps. But it began most evocatively with a Big Bang. Did the Big Bang know itself by that name as it was happening? Doubtful – the name came much later. In our world today, however, everything begins with a name. As you embark on the adventure of naming your company or product, you have the opportunity to create a Big Bang or a little whimper.

Do the right thing – make a Big Bang.

This Guide will show you how.

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Introduction: Who is Zinzin?

Zinzin is a naming and branding agency that creates powerful product and company names to propel and differentiate brands beyond their competition. We are committed to helping companies rise above the generic branding chatter that clogs cultural discourse. We want to set your brand free.

It is our belief that naming is a science, and for that we have a rigorous, battle-tested process in place. But we also firmly believe that naming is an art, and it is the art and poetry of great names that separate companies from the pack of competitors who fail to understand the value of a great name. A great name is an art, a great naming process is a science. Science + art = the most powerful project outcome.

About Our Name

Our own name, like many we have created for other companies, is full of surprises, layers of meaning, and rich associations, though at first glance it may seem no more than a "made-up" name with no story. No matter, a little brand called "Google" is in the same boat. And like "Google," our name is also uniquely "unknown" enough to enable us to brand it as THE place for the naming of companies and products. Eventually, we want "Zinzin" to become synonymous with naming the way "Google" is for search.

So where did the name "Zinzin" come from? Zinzin is colloquial French for bonkers, cracked, touched , loopy, potty, crazy, nuts. Just what you want in a naming firm, right? But wait, the plot thickens…

In addition to being a "crazy" word, Zinzin is also a French slang placeholder name, a name that you call something when you don't know or specify the actual name, like what in English we may refer to as a "gadget," "thingamabob," " thingamajig," "whatnot," or "whatchamacallit." Zinzin thus = entity, thing. In this sense, Zinzin is our very own permanent placeholder name, a universal *urname*.

James Joyce recognized the value of this word, and coined his own meanings for it in *Finnegans Wake*, where it represented noise, sin, punk, and the great disruptor, which, incidentally, is Zinzin's role in the global naming industry.

Read more about the Story of Zinzin, including team bios and more about the Zinzin name, on our website: *http://www.zinzin.com/our-story/*.

The Naming Process

The Road To An Amazing Name

Most companies that settle for a mediocre name do so because they fail to understand that a name is the single most important element of your brand strategy. But why exactly is a name so important?

The answer is simple: a company or product name is the first and most elemental point of definition and audience contact with your brand. In most respects, the name IS the brand, and sets the tone for everything your brand is about. In short, everything you do or ever will do begins with your name. That's why it's vital to get the name right.

When you have great name, people will remember it, talk about it, and have an emotional connection to your brand. The name becomes a natural and authentic extension of your brand, and demonstrates to the world the values of your brand positioning.

At Zinzin we strongly believe that having a powerful brand name will be one of the most important business decisions you will ever make. However, we also believe that we are NOT naming your company or product. We are, instead, naming the positioning of your company and product, the unique tone, personality, ideas and story you want your brand to express to the world. All great names support the positioning of the business or product they speak for and find a unique way to reinvigorate or change the conversation that an industry has been having with its customers.

Our naming process begins with understanding everything about your brand, where it's been and where it's headed, your competition, and your entire industry. Throughout the naming process, we will work together with you to refine the brand positioning based on our discussions of actual names, because the more specific and nuanced the positioning, the more effective the name will be.

Competitive Analysis

A key component of any naming or branding exercise is to thoroughly understand the competitive *Namescape*, or landscape mapping of names, in your industry:

- What are the company or product names in your market space?
- Do they cluster into obvious types of names?
- Where in this spectrum of competitor names does your name appear?
- Where in this spectrum of competitor names do you want your new name to appear in order to A) stand out from the competition, or B) blend in?
- Is there an opportunity in your market space to become a dominant brand by standing out clearly from the pack?

Our goal at Zinzin is to create names that set brands free from their competition. In most cases, blending-in should not even be an option. During the competitive analysis phase of a naming project, we plot the company, product or service names of a given market sector on a Namescape grid (see the Search Engines Namescape, below), which becomes a useful reference document of the competitive name reality facing your brand. This helps everyone on your naming team understand what types of names are overused in your market sector and what territory is ripe for exploration if you want to differentiate your brand from the competition.

We encourage you to print out this Namescape grid and play around with how the names are classified. It's an exercise that will get you thinking about the names in your own market space, which you can map out using the blank Namescape chart, below.

Competitive Namescape: Search Engines

Here is a selection of search engine names plotted in a competitive Namescape grid, ranked by relative value from 0 (worst) to 5 (best). See below for a detailed explanation.

	DESCRIPTIVE	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5		Google		Yahoo!	**5**
4					**4**
3		Bing	AltaVista HotBot SideStep	Hummingbird Kayak Northern Light Sphinx Wink	**3**
2	Wolfram Alpha	Alexa Clusty Lycos Mahalo Rollyo Tapu Trexy	AnyWho About.com Ask ChaCha Excite Galaxy Go Jumper OpenText Zoominfo	Dogpile Grub Mamma Spock	**2**
1	AllTheWeb Answers.com Info.com Sciencenet	Blekko Coveo Funnelback Grokker ISYS Kartoo Lucene Mobissimo Namazu Nutch Tanganode TeraText TREX Vivisimo Zabasearch	AskMeNow Brainboost ChunkIt! DeeperWeb Dieselpoint eHow ex.plode.us Harvester42 GigaBlast MegaSpider MetaGopher Monster Crawler Myriad Search OmniFind Seeks SharePoint Supercrawler Surfwax SWISH-E Turbo10 WireDoo	DuckDuckGo InfoTiger LeapFish	**1**

0	Concept Searching Limited DataparkSearch dtSearch Finding-People.com iSearch Live QnA LiveSearch Metscrawler MetaLib SearchPort Secure Enterprise Search WebCrawler X1 Enterprise Search	Cuil Endeca Eurekster Exalead Faroo Gonzui Inbenta Ixquick Krozilo Lexxe mnoGoSearch Xapian YaCy Yebol Zettair	Expert System Fast Search & Transfer ht://Dig OpenFTS Powerset What-U-Seek		0
	DESCRIPTIVE	**INVENTED**	**EXPERIENTIAL**	**EVOCATIVE**	

Name Value: The five levels of the vertical axis represent the relative value of a given name, ranked from a low of 0 value to a max of 5. The Value ranking is of course subjective, but it is derived from factors such as how engaging a name is with its target audience; how many layers of meaning, story, myth, metaphor, imagery the name has; associations, imagery, multiple layers; how memorable the name is; and how differentiated from the competition the name is.

Descriptive Names: Descriptive names are purely descriptive of what a company or product does or its function. They might also take the form of an acronym or the names of the company founders.

Invented Names: This category of names includes the purely invented, the morphemic mash-up, and foreign words that are not widely known to English speakers. At their best, Invented names can be poetic, rhythmic and ripe for investing with the soul of a brand (think Google).

Experiential Names: These are names that map to the experience of using a product or service, or to what a company does, or to an aspect of human experience. This category also includes all the generic adjective-based names, such as Advanced, Superior, Vantage, Smart, Super, Ultra, Mega, etc. Experiential names are usually literal, and are the types of names often created by cross-referencing a vision statement with a thesaurus.

Evocative Names: These are names that map metaphorically, rather than literally, to the brand positioning. Evocative names rise above the goods and services being offered, and paint a bigger picture. The best of them tap into a deep reservoir of shared cultural knowledge, myth, story, imagery, association, legend and art, and usually work on multiple levels. Nearly all the greatest brands that you are familiar with have evocative names.

Blank Namescape Chart

Here is a blank Namescape chart you can print and use for you own naming project.

	DESCRIPTIVE	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	
5					5
4					4
3					3
2					2
1					1
0					0
	DESCRIPTIVE	INVENTED	EXPERIENTIAL	EVOCATIVE	

Brand Positioning

We talk a lot about brand positioning and how important it is, so let's define our terms. Simply put, the positioning of a brand is the set of core messages the brand demonstrates to the world, through tone, personality, emotion and narrative. So a better way to think about your task is in these terms: you are not naming a company or product – you are instead naming the *positioning* of a company or product. Once you determine the brand positioning, only consider names that map strongly to that positioning. In fact, any names you consider *must* support the brand positioning in order to be successful.

Case in point: Virgin Airways. Now, if Virgin didn't exist, and you were to present this name to an airline naming committee, they would likely offer many valid-sounding reasons why this name can't fly: too edgy; says "we're new at this," which is the wrong message for an industry so dependent on security, trust and experience; people in Catholic countries we fly to will protest; etc. But the truth is that, when a name is in context and supports and is in turn supported by a cogent brand positioning, then people will never deconstruct the name into constituent negative parts. And the brand positioning for Virgin Airways is more along the lines of, "this is a fresh new way to travel / we're re-inventing the air travel experience." And for that message, Virgin is the perfect name.

Name Development

When we develop names for our clients, we make sure that the name always supports the brand positioning. The discussion of the names we present during the course of a project leads to a continual refinement of the brand positioning, as we hone in on the perfect fit between name and positioning.

There are of course many different types of names, but for the sake of discussion and clarification, we consider four broad classes of names: Descriptive, Invented, Experiential and Evocative.

Descriptive Names

Descriptive names are purely descriptive of what a company or product does or its function. They might also take the form of an acronym or the names of the company founders. In the past, most names were Descriptive, and that is still the path chosen by the majority of brands. These names have never been the most powerful, and unfortunately, since the rise of the Internet and online searching, it has become nearly

impossible to build an effective brand around a Descriptive name. For example: if you named your new automobile company “Fast Cars,” nobody would be able to find you online, because your name would disappear among all the search results for “fast cars.”

The notion that a name should be Descriptive in order to “describe what we do,” is completely wrong. A name rarely has to describe what the brand is all about -- that will become evident by the context surrounding the brand. The job of the name is to get your brand noticed, remembered and talked about, and that is rarely achieved by Descriptive names.

Invented Names

This category of names includes the purely invented, the morphemic mash-up, and foreign words that are not widely known to English speakers. At their best, Invented names can be poetic, rhythmic and ripe for investing with the soul of a brand (think Google). Invented names are chosen more and more lately, because they give you the easiest path to domain name and trademark acquisition. Bad invented names, often suffering from “morphemic addiction,” litter the cultural landscape, and should serve as a cautionary tale when going this route.

Experiential Names

These are names that map to the *experience* of using a product or service, or to what a company does, or to an aspect of human experience. This category also includes all the generic adjective-based names, such as Advanced, Superior, Vantage, Smart, Super, Ultra, Mega, etc. Experiential names are usually literal, and are the types of names often created by cross-referencing a vision statement with a thesaurus.

It is possible to create a successful Experiential name, but to do so requires a thorough understanding of the competitive namescape, because in most market sectors there are many, many similar Experiential names, each staking a small claim of semantic turf. Always make sure you are not just falling into the same types of names as everyone else.

Evocative Names

These are names that map metaphorically, rather than literally, to the brand positioning. Evocative names rise above the goods and services being offered, and paint a bigger picture. The best of them tap into a deep reservoir of shared cultural knowledge, myth, story, imagery, association, legend and art, and usually work on multiple levels. Nearly all the greatest brands that you are familiar with have evocative names.

Nearly all the greatest brands that you are familiar with have evocative names. And in fact, the best Evocative names often have Descriptive, Invented and/or Experiential

associations as well. In short, they work on so many levels they constantly surprise with new meaning and relevance.

Trademark Prescreening

During a Zinzin naming project, all company or product names we present to clients are at minimum prescreened by us against the USPTO trademark database and a Google due diligence screen. Depending upon the requirements of your project, names are also prescreened against the CTM, the WIPO Madrid Protocol, or other global trademark or specialty databases.

We do this in order to feel confident that the names your attorney submits for final trademark screening and application are at least likely to pass muster for registration. If not, valuable time is lost. If you are conducting your own naming process, we've posted links to the major online trademark screening pages here:

http://www.zinzin.com/process/trademark-prescreening/

Linguistic Connotation Screening

Some naming projects we work on require that names be screened for semantic meaning, usage, connotation, spelling and pronunciation in a variety of foreign languages.

Our partner for linguistic and foreign language connotation screening, Translations Direct, is one of the UK's most respected agencies for translation and language-related services. In 1997 its founder Nelly Thelwall, a Swiss national based in Salisbury, England, saw a need for a more thorough approach and introduced a unique four-stage process including editing and proofing by native speakers of the target language.

Today, with experience in more than 50 languages/dialects, the company offers single- and multi-language services and is increasingly asked to help with overseas product testing and market research. So what is Nelly's secret? "Clients appreciate our personal service," she says, "but most importantly we deliver work that's fluent, totally accurate and on time."

During the course of a European naming project for a Dutch client, Translations Direct performed linguistic and connotation screens of names in Arabic, Danish, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Norwegian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish on a rush basis over a weekend to meet a Monday deadline. And for a recent Canadian

project, Translations Direct screened nine names in ten European and fifteen non-European languages with a four-day turnaround!

With Nelly and her crew working for us, we can assure our clients that the name we create for them will not contain any nasty surprises in other languages.

Name Evaluation

At some point near the end of a naming project comes the time to actually choose your new name. How do you evaluate the names on your shortlist to make sure you choose the best name? Sometimes it is obvious which name is the best, and once you become aware of that all other names tend to fall away. Still, it's important to understand the many attributes and qualities that make up a name, so you can make informed, objective decisions when comparing one name to another.

With all of these qualities, there is no inherent "right" answer. The single most important criteria is that the name support the brand positioning. For example, if the positioning demands a name that is warm and human, but a given name under consideration is cold and technical, then that name is failing to support the brand positioning in the "Temperature" quality. These qualities are also relevant to all aspects of a brand, not just the name.

Voice: How does a name sound? Does it roll off the tongue? Is it easy or fun to say? Can it be easily spoken by speakers of many different languages? What does it sound like to others? A name will be spoken many times — in conversation, when answering the phone, in television commercials, YouTube videos, and most importantly, by word-of-mouth. A name that trips people up when spoken, or sounds off-putting when heard, is not going to foster emotional engagement with your audience. This is easy to test on a basic level: have a colleague call you, and answer the phone by speaking the name. How does it feel to do that? How does it feel for your colleague to hear it spoken over the phone?

Visual: Names are not only heard, they are seen, in logos, on websites, and in marketing collateral. Names can appear tiny in fine print, and gigantic on a billboard, blimp, or even written across the sky. Looks are important, so make sure the name looks good and avoids obvious syntactical no-nos. It helps to mock-up different visual treatments of the names you are considering, and be sure to show them to designers and other visual people.

Breadth: How many aspects of the brand positioning does that name map to? If there are five primary positioning points, does a given name map to all five, to just some of them, or to none?

Depth: When a name has many layers of meaning, myth, story, and history, it has great depth. Different people will react to and understand deep names in different ways, and deep names tend to reveal the many facets of their character over time, rather than all at once. Deep names are still just as good the thousandth time you encounter them as they are the first time, they have great legs and never grow old. They accomplish this feat partly because, by their very nature of being deep, avoid the shallow pits of evanescent fads and naming trends (think generic descriptive, ".com," vowel-dropping, color+noun, etc.).

Temperature: Is a name warm and human, or cold, clinical, technical? Does it bring a smile to your face, a blank look, or a scowl? This is a quality of names that is based both on linguistics and on emotional reaction.

Personality: The unique tone, personality and attitude of a name. Some names are loud and energetic, some are quiet and retiring. Some shout, and others whisper. For some the most important quality is confidence, for others its adventure, revolution, or steadfastness. It could be almost anything, but the key is that the personality of a name reflect the personality of your company. It is the soul of your brand, the thing that most makes your brand yours, not another company's.

Differentiation: It only makes sense that, if you intend to differentiate your brand from your competition, that you begin with a name that stands apart from the crowd. This is a key to creating a *memorable* name, since you can't hope for anyone to remember your name if it blends in with all the others in your market sector. When a name stands apart, it gets noticed, talked about, covered in the press, and develops into a distinctive brand with a life of its own.

X-factor: This is the wildcard, and is all about mystery, the unknown, the unexpected and far from obvious. Not every brand has it, but for those that do, it can be very powerful. Vitality, energy, liveliness, buzz, electricity, attitude, presence, engagement, provocation, originality, distinctiveness, memorability — these are all concepts related to the X-factor of a name. It's *that certain something*, that very original merging of the unexpected with a clear evocation of the brand positioning. It's what's often behind the "Why didn't I think of that?" feeling. It's what makes a name an epiphany.

Decision Making

Now you should have a better idea about why certain names work better than others. But name evaluation 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 the competitive Namescape are taken into consideration. Clearly, you are not just choosing a name, you are also making a number of important decisions in order to find the pitch-perfect tone for your brand, for your voice in the world.

Most corporations have no problem delegating marketing and advertising issues to the marketing department, but when naming is involved, especially naming the company itself or key products, suddenly everyone wants to have a say in the process, and it can quickly become politically and emotionally charged. Therefore, it is essential that you keep the number of people involved in a naming project to a minimum, that they have real authority, and that they all understand the ideas outlined above about what factors determine the relative strength of a name. When outside actors have final decision-making authority, it is vital that they be briefed in such a way as to understand a name's intrinsic qualities and how they support the brand positioning. This is what will help you keep the process objective, and avoid the uninformed, subjective "like"/"don't like" response.

Going Deeper

Naming Advice For New Businesses

What makes a great business name?

A great company or product brand name is one that makes people stop in their tracks, even for just a few seconds, and think, “What’s that?” Because at that point you have interrupted a person’s natural attention filter that filters out anything deemed non-important or already known. Mediocre names are easily ignored because they “sound like everything else” in a given industry, but a great name short circuits this process of routine filtering and sets up the person encountering the brand to be engaged and ready to hear whatever message the brand is presenting. Many of the most powerful brand names are what we call evocative names, names that map to and support the positioning of a brand metaphorically, rather than literally and linearly.

What do new businesses commonly miss when crafting a business name?

The biggest mistake businesses typically make is to think that the name somehow has to either describe what the company or product does, or describe some key experiential attribute of the brand, such as “speed” or “flexibility.” After the company realizes that all such direct names are already in use in their (and every!) industry, their next step is usually a trip to the thesaurus to generate synonyms for “speed,” “flexibility,” or whatever their key brand attributes may be. When they realize those names are also all taken, they start creating mashups of word parts of these synonyms, until they have a name that they are able to trademark. Or they borrow from ancient or foreign languages and often mash up those as well. What they are left with is a name that may be technically “unique” and trademarkable, but that may be ugly to look at, difficult to pronounce, impossible to remember, and thus has zero brand value.

What is Zinzin's top advice for new businesses when it comes to naming?

First, do a thorough analysis of the brand names of your competitors, like the competitive *Namescape* we develop during our projects, to map out the territory of what's already out there in your space and reveal how most of your competitors are blending in with each other instead of standing out. Next, only consider names that stand out from the competition, that look and sound good, are easy to pronounce, and, as a bonus provided by evocative names, have deep layers of meaning and history behind them, allowing you to tell a compelling story that will empower your brand marketing efforts for years to come. The name you choose should also be extensible, able to work with sub-branded products, for instance, or as a company name for whatever you may be doing in five or ten years, not just today.

Embracing Creative Friction & Uncertainty

Jeremy Dean, in a recent article on his site PsyBlog, "Why People Secretly Fear Creative Ideas,"[1] notes that creative ideas are often rejected in favor of conformity and uniformity, and why this is so, citing several psychology studies (Mueller et al. 201[2]; Westby & Dawson, 1995[3]) to back up his case. Dean asks rhetorically,

> Does society really value creativity? People say they want more creative people, more creative ideas and solutions, but do they really?

The answer, sadly, is no, but why is that so? The reason, Dean writes, is that fear of *uncertainty* overrules the desire for creativity:

> Across two experiments Mueller and colleagues found that when people felt uncertain they were:
>
> - more likely to have negative thoughts about creative ideas,
> - and found it more difficult to recognise creative ideas.
>
> This supports the idea that people don't like creative ideas because they tend to increase uncertainty. The thinking goes like this: we know how to do things we've done before, but new things are mysterious. How will we achieve it? Is it practical? What could go wrong? And so on…
>
> People don't like to feel uncertain; it's an aversive state that generally we try to escape from. Unfortunately creativity requires uncertainty by definition, because we're trying to do something that hasn't been done before.
>
> People deal with the disconnect by saying one thing, "Creativity is good, we want more of it!" but actually rejecting creative ideas for being impractical.
>
> And, the more uncertain people feel, the harder they find it to recognise a truly creative idea. So as a society we end up sticking our heads in the sand and carrying on doing the same old things we've been doing all along, just to avoid feeling uncertain.
>
> Instead we should be embracing uncertainty because it's only when we're unsure that we can be sure we're in new territory.

Creativity requires uncertainty by definition, because we're trying to do something that hasn't been done before. Dean is spot-on in his assessment, and a primary factor keeping people from embracing uncertainty is fear of failure. Adrian Savage wrote a great article earlier this year for Lifehack.org, "How fear of failure destroys success,"[4] where he

1 http://www.spring.org.uk/2011/12/why-people-secretly-fear-creative-ideas.php
2 http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/11/29/0956797611421018
3 http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s15326934crj0801_1
4 http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifehack/how-fear-of-failure-destroys-success.html

notes just how vitally important failure's handmaidens, trial and error, are to achieving ultimate success:

> Trial and error are usually the prime means of solving life's problems. Yet many people are afraid to undertake the trial because they're too afraid of experiencing the error. They make the mistake of believing that all error is wrong and harmful, when most of it is both helpful and necessary. Error provides the feedback that points the way to success. Only error pushes people to put together a new and better trial, leading through yet more errors and trials until they can ultimately find a viable and creative solution. To meet with an error is not to fail, but to take one more step on the path to final success. No errors means no successes either.

Savage goes on to illustrate various different ways that individuals and corporations allow fear of failure to block creative solutions to problems: a culture of perfection, clinging to past success, being a high achiever, or being unbalanced in any one direction (too over-achieving, too moral, too anything), and that finding a proper *balance* is the way out of this trap:

Everyone likes to succeed. The problem comes when fear of failure is dominant. When you can no longer accept the inevitability of making mistakes, nor recognize the importance of trial and error in finding the best and most creative solution. The more creative you are, the more errors you are going to make. Get used to it. Deciding to avoid the errors will destroy your creativity too.

Balance counts more than you think. Some tartness must season the sweetest dish. A little selfishness is valuable even in the most caring person. And a little failure is essential to preserve everyone's perspective on success.

We hear a lot about being positive. Maybe we also need to recognize that the negative parts of our lives and experience have just as important a role to play in finding success, in work and in life.

Savor these two of Savage's ideas, they are golden: 1) The more creative you are, the more errors you are going to make. Get used to it. Deciding to avoid the errors will destroy your creativity too. 2) We hear a lot about being positive. Maybe we also need to recognize that the negative parts of our lives and experience have just as important a role to play in finding success, in work and in life. The key is to remain open to new ideas, methods, and experiences.

This applies to all aspects of business, but resonates especially strongly for me in how it relates to the naming process. In our own work here at Zinzin, we live in permanent trial and error mode, because we accept the fact that on every naming project, we will ultimately create hundreds of "failure" names that will lead us to the one great name that defines a successful outcome. Savage's description of trial-error-reiteration adroitly captures what our line of work entails. You can only find the perfect name by multiple

rounds of experiment, play, questioning, red herrings, dead ends, trips down rabbit holes, self-criticism, debate, and chance. Be open to creative ideas in yourself and others, and embrace the *trial/error/failure/try again* process.

When you get knocked over by failure and fall down on your face, get up and repeat, over and over again. The good news is that once you make this process a habit, it becomes second nature and much easier to tolerate. Eventually you realize that the failures are not speed bumps on the road to success — they are actually *catalysts*, without which there wouldn't be any success.

Escape The Groupthink Brainstorm & Go Deep

In an article in the New York Times, "The Rise of the New Groupthink,"[5] Susan Cain makes a strong argument against the rising tide of groupthink in our culture. This kind of "collaborative creativity" can readily be seen in the proliferation of group assignments in school, companies with open plan offices with no personal space, and, in the naming business, naming committees with too many members trying to collaboratively create a new brand name.

The problem is, for any kind of creative endeavor, groupthink doesn't work.

> Research strongly suggests that people are more creative when they enjoy privacy and freedom from interruption. And the most spectacularly creative people in many fields are often introverted, according to studies by the psychologists Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Gregory Feist. They're extroverted enough to exchange and advance ideas, but see themselves as independent and individualistic. They're not joiners by nature.
>
> One explanation for these findings is that introverts are comfortable working alone — and solitude is a catalyst to innovation. As the influential psychologist Hans Eysenck observed, introversion fosters creativity by "concentrating the mind on the tasks in hand, and preventing the dissipation of energy on social and sexual matters unrelated to work."

In other words, the social aspects of work might be beneficial and necessary to an individual's overall health, but they are not conducive to creative work and the development of new ideas. And "creative work" is something that should be required of everyone in an organization, not just so-called "creatives." Here is Apple co-founder and famous introvert Steve Wozniak describing engineers:

> "Most inventors and engineers I've met are like me … they live in their heads. They're almost like artists. In fact, the very best of them are artists. And artists work best alone …. I'm going to give you some advice that might be hard to take. That advice is: Work alone… Not on a committee. Not on a team."

The key for any company or organization is to find the right balance, to recognize that people need uninterrupted "alone time" to do their best work, thought they and others in the organization can benefit from the collective energy of occasional group interaction. *Interaction* and exchange of ideas, not continuous *collaboration*, because,

> …it's one thing to associate with a group in which each member works autonomously on his piece of the puzzle; it's another to be corralled into endless meetings or conference calls conducted in offices that afford no

5 http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/15/opinion/sunday/the-rise-of-the-new-groupthink.html

> respite from the noise and gaze of co-workers. Studies show that open-plan offices make workers hostile, insecure and distracted. They're also more likely to suffer from high blood pressure, stress, the flu and exhaustion. And people whose work is interrupted make 50 percent more mistakes and take twice as long to finish it.

Privacy also makes us productive, notes Cain. She references a study of 600 computer programmers at 92 companies called the Coding War Games that showed quantitatively that "what distinguished programmers at the top-performing companies wasn't greater experience or better pay, it was how much privacy, personal workspace and freedom from interruption they enjoyed." And creative solitude helps learning too, because an individual can work more on the things that challenge them, which is not an option in a group learning situation.

Brainstorming is Not Enough

The flip side of deep, focused, solitary work is the corporate *brainstorming* session. We've seen this time and again in the naming industry, where brainstorming sessions are usually conducted by companies in-house, or by their advertising agency. The company or agency will ask a group of its "creatives" to work late one night, fueled by pizza, beer and Red Bull, and work together to *brainstorm* a new name. As you may have guessed, such a process rarely if ever generates the strongest, most powerful names.

> Conversely, brainstorming sessions are one of the worst possible ways to stimulate creativity….decades of research show that individuals almost always perform better than groups in both quality and quantity, and group performance gets worse as group size increases. The "evidence from science suggests that business people must be insane to use brainstorming groups," wrote the organizational psychologist Adrian Furnham. "If you have talented and motivated people, they should be encouraged to work alone when creativity or efficiency is the highest priority."
>
> The reasons brainstorming fails are instructive for other forms of group work, too. People in groups tend to sit back and let others do the work; they instinctively mimic others' opinions and lose sight of their own; and, often succumb to peer pressure. The Emory University neuroscientist Gregory Berns found that when we take a stance different from the group's, we activate the amygdala, a small organ in the brain associated with the fear of rejection. Professor Berns calls this "the pain of independence."

Simon Sinek has also weighed-in[6] on why the best ideas don't happen though groupthink, pointing out that brainstorming sessions only activate the conscious mind, not the subconscious mind. He notes that your rational brain can only access about two

6 http://www.zinzin.com/branding/get-outside-of-yourself/

feet of information around you, while your unconscious brain can access the equivalent of eleven acres of information around you. This treasure trove of unconscious information is where *gut* decisions and *epiphanies* come from, and they just can't come out in the collective groupthink environment of a brainstorming session.

The only way to make brainstorming productive is to have individuals work alone on the problem at hand before and after the group work, and use the brainstorming session for communication, interaction and amplification of the individual ideas, rather than a mechanism for creating those ideas. There simply is no substitute for the deep thought of individual alone time away from all distractions.

One exception to the general shortcomings of groupthink is electronic collaboration at a distance, or so-called "crowdsourcing," where individuals working "alone together" have the potential to tap into the best of both worlds. In the rosiest of such scenarios, individuals still have plenty of solitary creative time, which is then combined with focused bursts of remote group collaboration free from the negative dynamics that come with in-person group interaction. Cain notes that, "most humans have two contradictory impulses: we love and need one another, yet we crave privacy and autonomy," and finding the right balance is crucial for success:

> To harness the energy that fuels both these drives, we need to move beyond the New Groupthink and embrace a more nuanced approach to creativity and learning. Our offices should encourage casual, cafe-style interactions, but allow people to disappear into personalized, private spaces when they want to be alone. Our schools should teach children to work with others, but also to work on their own for sustained periods of time. And we must recognize that introverts like Steve Wozniak need extra quiet and privacy to do their best work.

Companies should take heed of these findings and incorporate them into how they structure their workflow and work environments. In our own naming work we have always worked this way, as individuals pursuing ideas on our own, punctuated by regular, brief and focused sessions for discussion, argument, and collaboration, both internally and with our clients; then back to our private spaces for more deep thought.

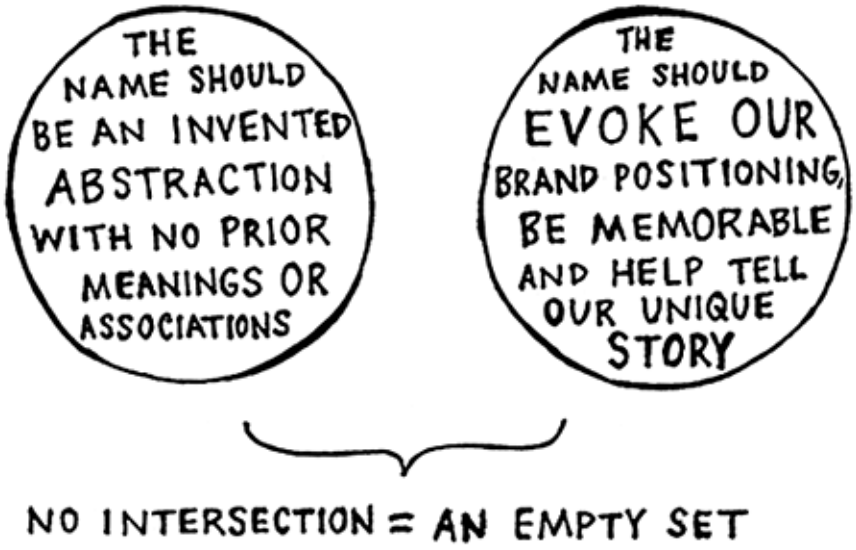
If your company is staffed only with extroverts, it's time to hire some introverts, pronto, and give them the space they need to go deep. The extroverts will benefit too.

Five Steps to Avoid Defining an Empty Set in Your Brand Positioning

Image: Dave Walker, The Cartoon Blog.

The brand positioning challenge

When naming, it's tempting to create a well-defined, buttoned-down brand position. You may be rigidly specific down to the smallest detail. This positioning stance is often the outgrowth of a process in which competing client factions allow too many cooks in the kitchen. These "cooks" often dictate an overwhelming number of positioning "requirements" to satisfy each faction. This is a dangerous practice. It can lead to the creation of an empty set. Conflicting "rules" cancel each other out. They leave a hollow space where no possible name can exist. Here's an example, exaggerated to make a point:



A common pitfall

In the search for a perfect name, beware of this demon when it rears its ugly head — you or your team members declare, "I'll know it when I see it." This is the kiss of death for a naming project. It's highly likely your team is dealing with the impossible outcome of an empty set, or the wrong filters are in place, or both.

In this situation, you could consider every word in the English language (UPDATE: officially 1,066,095.9 as of August 16, 2021) as a potential name for your new company or product. You could even consider another million invented or compound names. But you could still never "know it when you see it." There's a simple reason for this. No name can satisfy a brand positioning framework that defines an empty set. This situation is the cause of most abandoned naming attempts.

Adjust your approach

The first thing to do is to make sure you have no contradictions in the brand positioning. No name can satisfy all requirements. For instance, here's an example of an empty set — "invented abstraction with no prior meanings that evokes our brand positioning, is memorable, and helps tell our unique story." Another example might be — "available for global trademark, exact match.com domain, one syllable, five letters maximum, easily understood and pronounceable in eastern as well as western languages, yet a common word that closely describes our brand position in our industry."

Time to order up a new dictionary, a new language, or a new parallel universe. The first step toward recovery is to recognize that you have a problem. Then make changes in your approach.

Here are five steps to free yourself from the prison of empty-set brand positioning:

1. **Resist the urge to box your brand into a corner.** Create a *cloud* of positioning attributes and know your fundamental story. Don't try to describe every little detail of the positioning, then expect to find a name that aligns with all of them. You won't.
2. **Map to, reinforce, and inform your brand positioning.** It's a two-way street — brand positioning leads to a name, but the *perfect* name also influences the brand positioning moving forward. For example, a similar brand positioning could have led to the names Yahoo! and Excite. But the brand positioning that came after the names was very different. In the former, the brand positioning was powerful with great marketing legs for years to come. In the latter, it was a conforming derivative long since out of business.
3. **Open your minds to metaphor.** Avoid merely *describing* your brand position with a descriptive or experiential name. Instead, consider a highly-memorable evocative name that differentiates your brand from your competitors. Your name should *demonstrate* your brand positioning rather than explain it. The key is to move beyond the literal and into the metaphorical. Think Amazon, Virgin, Twitter, Coach, Caterpillar, Yahoo!, Oracle, Apple. That's not to say that great invented or experiential names aren't out there. They're just few and far between. You have to work extra hard to identify them.
4. **Evaluate names like a Socratic dialog, not an exercise in democracy.** Resist the urge to let everyone on your naming team, or your company, vote on the final name. Nobody's first choice will survive. The "winning" name will be the one that is most people's third choice. It's the one nobody loves, but everyone can "live with." Great brands are not created from a shrug of the shoulders. A vigorous debate is beneficial. It's even sometimes necessary to create a powerful name. If half the team loves a name and half the team hates it, you're in a much better place than if you have immediate consensus one way or the other. When you adopt an amazing name, no matter how contentious the process may have been, the naysayers will eventually embrace it. They always do. It takes some people longer to understand the power of a truly different and memorable name.
5. **Consider hiring a naming agency (even if it's not Zinzin).** If you are stuck in your naming process, you will likely benefit by hiring a naming agency to come in with a fresh perspective. A naming agency can also help your team see name development and brand positioning in a new light. There is a (darker) flip side you can pursue: take a short list of names to a focus group or other

uninformed outside agent to solicit opinions. This will almost guarantee that the most unique and powerful names will be killed off. Whereas, the weakest, most typical or conformist names will be celebrated. This is especially damning, of course, when you attempt to position your brand as bold, adventurous, and fiercely independent.

Transcend the "empty set" conundrum

During your naming project, you will *generate –> iterate –> regenerate –>* and *reiterate* the name development process. Keep the above five steps in mind. At each step, continue to be sure that you have not defined an empty set. If you have, you'll never find the perfect name. You wouldn't know it if you saw it.

Henry Miller's Eleven Commandments

In the 1930s, Henry Miller[7] drew up a list of 11 commandments that he wrote for himself to follow in his career as a writer. We have annotated Miller's original commandments (in bold, below) with our observations about how each of them can be applied to various aspects of the naming process.

1. **Work on one thing at a time until finished.** Keep your attention focused on the task at hand. Set aside time and space free from the distractions of the Internet, social media and telephones to concentrate on your naming project. In the words of Buckminster Fuller, "Thinking is a momentary dismissal of irrelevancies."
2. **Start no more new books, add no more new material to "Black Spring."** Recognize when a project is finished, and be prepared to move on.
3. **Don't be nervous. Work calmly, joyously, recklessly on whatever is in hand.** As we say in Manifesto numbers 13 and 14 (see below), naming should be fun and you have to set a positive tone.
4. **Work according to Program and not according to mood. Stop at the appointed time!** Another way to say this is to keep the project as objective as possible by staying focused on the brand positioning, not on subjective reactions to names.
5. **When you can't create you can work.** Don't wait for "inspiration." If you don't feel as if any good, creative names are resulting from your process at any given time, don't force it or stress out. Do some other related work to feed your fires: reading, research, making lists. Henry is right: you can't always create, but you can always work. And don't underestimate the value of hard work. To quote the late, great Cy Twombly: "When I work, I work very fast, but preparing to work can take any length of time."
6. **Cement a little every day, rather than add new fertilizers.** Diligence and perseverance. Try to make some kind of progress every day, or at least increase your understanding of the process.
7. **Keep human! See people, go places, drink if you feel like it.** Allow life and real world experience to inspire and inform your naming process. Don't get stuck in abstractions and ruts. Burn your thesaurus (don't worry, it'll still be there for you online when you really need it.) (See Manifesto #13, below).
8. **Don't be a draught-horse! Work with pleasure only.** See number three, above.
9. **Discard the Program when you feel like it—but go back to it next day. Concentrate. Narrow down. Exclude.** Give yourself flexibility to grow and

7 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Miller

adapt, but keep bringing the focus back to the project and the brand positioning (see number four, above). As the project progresses, it should become ever more focused.

10. **Forget the books you want to write. Think only of the book you are writing.** Don't force all the great names in your head into the current project. Think only of the specific positioning of the current project, and make sure all names under consideration map strongly to that positioning.
11. **Write first and always. Painting, music, friends, cinema, all these come afterwards.** Naming comes first. After that, the rest is gravy, icing, spice, and all other food metaphors.

(Source of the 11 Commandments: Henry Miller on Writing[8] via Lists of Note[9])

8 http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0811201120/ref=as_li_ss_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=letofnot-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0811201120
9 http://www.listsofnote.com/

Brands Learn It's Time To Get Real

We've been saying this for what seems like forever. In this savage economic climate, more and more businesses are realizing how important it is to get their branding right, and are looking for any way they can to add a few percentage points to their bottom lines. An article in the Washington Post, "Businesses find they can't grow without branding"[10], highlights the trend in the Washington DC area:

> In the Washington area, Honest Tea is far from alone in seeking a brand make-over. The business of image enhancement is heating up in the region — and not just among companies selling consumer products. Government contracting firms are adopting new nomenclatures that create buzz. Charities are changing their names to reflect new missions. Trade associations are updating their logos and tag lines to remain relevant to members.

We are seeing this shift happen all over, not just in Washington DC, and the key reason for it is the massive change that many markets are undergoing:

> "Everything's changed," said Christie J. Susko, immediate past president of AMA DC, which recently changed its logo and tag line. "Resources have changed. Products have changed. Prices have changed. Business models have changed. People are spending money differently. [Some companies have] gone out of business and others have changed their value proposition to stay competitive.
>
> "As a result," Susko added, "everybody is trying to figure out their place in the new market."

Be Real Get HonestOne of the primary drivers of this trend is a big push toward "authenticity" — think of it as the "Get Real" movement. Ironically, the article leads off with the story of Honest Tea ditching its *old* tagline of "Get Real. Be Honest." For the the beverage maker to really "Get Real," they had to ditch their old approach of *telling* people to get real, because true authenticity means never having to say you're authentic! (They were also honing their message after expanding into new markets thanks to new owner Coca-Cola.) The article speculates that the reason for this is the pervasiveness of media, social and otherwise, that will expose any corporate hypocrisy in an Internet heartbeat:

> These days consumers are driving the public perception of companies, offering their sometimes not-so-flattering reviews of products and services through blogs, Web sites and social media. Companies are responding to the public's demand for transparency; in this era of the 24/7 news cycle, consumers no longer are tolerating firms that represent one thing in their

10 http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/businesses-find-they-cant-grow-without-branding/2011/07/27/gIQARXLhlI_story.html

> branding but demonstrate something entirely different in news coverage, experts say.
>
> "There is so much information available to us and we can make up our own minds" about companies, said Susan Waldman, partner for strategic services at the Washington-based branding firm ZilYen. (Her business is thriving. The firm's revenue from March to May, she said, surpassed what it made during the entirety of 2010.)
>
> "Now the whole company is really being charged with standing behind the values claimed in the marketplace," Waldman said. "Everything you do and say becomes part of what audiences see as your brand."

And of course, the top-level of any company's marketing will be their name:

> A key element in a company's branding is what it calls itself. Business nomenclatures of the past were more straightforward; firms typically were named for their founders or the services they provided. Now names are much more creative — consisting of made-up words, atypical spellings and odd combinations of capital and lower-case letters: strEATS, QinetiQ, Opower, PopVox, 20/20 GeneSystems, JESS3. Today's names are designed to stand out, create buzz and reflect innovation.

Unfortunately, most such attempts, as the examples above show, fall short in their ability to stand out in an increasingly crowded marketplace where most companies are doing the same thing at the same time.

Authenticity, like a great name, is a quality your brand can only demonstrate, not explain. What you fail to demonstrate directly you have to explain, and that's called advertising. More and more, consumers are onto brands that try to use advertising to pull a fast one, and crave authentic brands.

When it comes to your name and primary messaging, keeping it real is a must, and something you just can't fake.

Krafting a Failed Name: Mondelez, or How Not To Do Corporate Rebranding

Kraft Foods is separating its higher-growth global snacking business unit from its North American grocery division, so it needs a name for the new company. The process Kraft used to get that new name, and the rationalization of the name, make a great example of what *not* to do in a naming process.

The new corporate brand name, Mondelez International, is fraught with problems. As the New York Times DealBook blog mildly puts it[11], "The move highlights the potential complications that come with corporate rebranding, especially when a company decides to make up a name out of whole cloth."

Potential complications is an understatement for the activity of launching a major company with a terrible name that nobody will remember. So how did a global giant like Kraft get into the position of adopting a weak, unmemorable and unpronounceable name for its new spinoff? They did it the old fashioned way — by (very large) committee: "Kraft said that the moniker came from submissions by more than 1,000 employees around the world, who suggested over 1,700 names." For a company that makes food products from recipes, you'd think they might have noticed that democratizing the naming process like this is a recipe for disaster. For example, let's say that we're going to have a free ice cream day for our 1000-employee company. Everybody can have as much ice cream as they want, but we can only get one flavor, so we need to reach a consensus on which flavor to serve. Will it be Cherry Garcia or Chunky Monkey? No, it will be either vanilla or chocolate (oh wait, some people have chocolate allergies) — ok, vanilla it is.

Once Kraft had a process in place to guarantee that the name squeezed out the end of their soft-serve branding machine would be vanilla, all that remained was the justification, and here it comes:

> The winner: Mondelez, cobbled together from submissions from a North American employee and a European one. It's a combination of "monde," the Latin word for "world," and "delez," a made-up word meant to suggest "delicious." Hence, "delicious world."

"Cobbled together" is right. The problem is, real people inhabiting the real world would never encounter a name like Mondelez and feel the warm glow of entering a "delicious world." And who says that the made-up "word" *delez* suggests "delicious"? You could make a better argument that it suggests "delays" or "deletes," as in, "Food you can't eats, so you should deletes. Don't delay." Pardon the pigeon Esperanto. Better yet,

11 Kraft, 'Mondelez' and the Art of Corporate Rebranding: http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2012/03/21/kraft-mondelez-and-the-art-of-corporate-rebranding/

Mondelez sounds like a slang term for oral sex in Russian. Delicious world, indeed! But since they manufacture "snacks," this connotation can only help improve brand recognition, at least among horny/hungry Russians. Score one for Kraft.

The next part of this process train-wreck is to trot out the CEO to perform, as if on cue, the Name Announcement Song & Dance, which Kraft dutifully obliges. Here is the marketing *robospeak* attributed to Irene B. Rosenfeld, the chairman and CEO of the new company:

> "For the new global snacks company, we wanted to find a new name that could serve as an umbrella for our iconic brands, reinforce the truly global nature of this business and build on our higher purpose – to 'make today delicious.' Mondelez perfectly captures the idea of a 'delicious world' and will serve as a solid foundation for the strong relationships we want to create with our consumers, customers, employees and shareholders."

Our question for Ms. Rosenfeld is, when was the last time you entered a "strong relationship" with a brand that had a name like Mondelez? Would you even remember its name a week later?

Kraft need look no further than their own Nabisco brand cookie product, Oreo, for an example of an outstanding invented name that is warm, poetic, fun to say, memorable and meshes beautifully with the product it identifies. With the right process in place, Kraft could have created a winning brand, one that is less vanilla, and more Karamel Sutra. Then it really would have been a *Delicious World* after all.

Oh well. Kraft's loss creates an opening and opportunity for other companies that are less fearful of standing out from the crowd with a bold, memorable, powerful name.

Jack Kerouac's List of 30 Beliefs and Techniques for Prose and Life (& Naming)

Jack Kerouac drew up a "List of 30 Beliefs and Techniques for Prose and Life[12]," which was "allegedly tacked on the wall of Allen Ginsberg's hotel room in North Beach a year before his iconic poem 'Howl' was written — which is of little surprise, given Ginsberg readily admitted Kerouac's influence and even noted in the dedication of Howl and Other Poems that he took the title from Kerouac," notes *brainpicker* Maria Popova.

Kerouac's list is inspiring not just for writers, but for any kind of artist, and even for the process of name development. Each item in Kerouac's original list, below, is in italics, and each is followed by our comments relating it to the art of naming.

1. *Scribbled secret notebooks, and wild typewritten pages, for yr own joy*. Keep lots of notebooks, scraps, post-its and shreds with names, ideas, concepts. You never know when and how they may lead to the development of a name.
2. *Submissive to everything, open, listening*. Always. Very important. The world is speaking the name you are looking for, but if you aren't listening, you'll likely miss it.
3. *Try never get drunk outside yr own house*. Avoid getting drunk in general, but if you do, make sure you have a notebook with you (see #1).
4. *Be in love with yr life*. Yes. It's the only one you've got. Great advice beyond naming, and something Kerouac himself ultimately failed to uphold, but in the realm of naming, you must embrace the fact that you are a namer. Own it. Love it.
5. *Something that you feel will find its own form*. Trust your gut. Follow the glimmer of ideas, no matter how evanescent. They will lead to the "form" of names.
6. *Be crazy dumbsaint of the mind*. Because it's a fine line between inspiration and madness. You have to push the limits to know where the limits are. Let wisdom wash over you–don't presume to already have it (you don't).
7. *Blow as deep as you want to blow*. Go deep into a name or idea and don't let anything hold you back.

12 Source: University of Pennsylvania – http://writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/kerouac-technique.html – via Brain Pickings – http://www.brainpickings.org/index.php/2012/03/22/jack-kerouac-belief-and-technique-for-modern-prose/.

8. *Write what you want bottomless from bottom of the mind*. Combine this with #1, above. Names will come from writing often, whether lists, stories, poems, blog posts, or screeds of any sort. Keep writing, keep banging your fingers into keys and moving your pen over paper. Words will appear in great, blooming clusters, words that names are made from.
9. *The unspeakable visions of the individual*. Visions and other unnamables that nevertheless might lead to names. Just because something can't be described (named) doesn't mean you can't describe (name) it. You can. Try it.
10. *No time for poetry but exactly what is*. Poetry isn't a magic place you have to travel to or make time for. It is all around us all the time. It is exactly what is.
11. *Visionary tics shivering in the chest*. Exactly where great names often begin. You can almost feel them coming before they arrive, tickling your primordial amygdala limbic mind before your advanced cerebral cortex catches up and understands their value.
12. *In tranced fixation dreaming upon object before you*. Focus on the task at hand, meditate on the brand positioning that a name must map to. "Tranced fixation dreaming" the best way to describe this state combining search and receptivity (see #2) to new ideas.
13. *Remove literary, grammatical and syntactical inhibition*. All that can come later, when you're in editing mode. When developing names, start with no rules, then gradually introduce the most important one: that the name supports the brand positioning.
14. *Like Proust be an old teahead of time*. Step out of the linear flow of time. A name can come from any place, or any time, and the collision of disparate eras can be powerful in developing a name.
15. *Telling the true story of the world in interior monolog*. Turn the naming problem into a story and run through it in your mind over and over. Add other stories, and let the stories collide, like particles in an atom smasher. The birth of new names just might result.
16. *The jewel center of interest is the eye within the eye*. The best names have many layers of meaning, and you can drill deep into them and keep discovering new things.
17. *Write in recollection and amazement for yourself*. Draw on your memory and follow what makes you most passionate, obsessed and excited. Never fake your response to art–if you don't feel it, move on. But if something strikes you powerfully, follow it as far as it will take you.
18. *Work from pithy middle eye out, swimming in language sea*. Immerse yourself in words to the point of drowning–the words that coalesce into a life preserver to save you just might form your new name.

19. *Accept loss forever*. Not every idea works. Most, in fact, are "failures." Failures diligently explored can lead to success, so the only true failures are the failures that are abandoned. So accept failure and loss, and perhaps loss of sleep, into your naming process.
20. *Believe in the holy contour of life*. All of life is waiting for you when you are in need of a name, not just the dictionary and thesaurus. Believe in life and immerse yourself in it, following its winking clues.
21. *Struggle to sketch the flow that already exists intact in mind*. Great names are already flowing in your mind; the trick is to get them out into the light of consciousness without your editor brain and logic filters keeping them locked up out of sight. "Sketch the flow" is another way of saying, in the context of naming, "map-out the brand positioning with metaphors."
22. *Dont think of words when you stop but to see picture better*. Visualize the brand you are naming, and visualize how a name might be used. Try not to define the name at first with other, often limiting, words, but instead keep it pure in your vision.
23. *Keep track of every day the date emblazoned in yr morning*. You want to create space for free range roaming in the playground of your mind, but it's equally important to keep the process structured, to temper unbridled freedom with the constraint of process. Michelangelo said, "Art lives by constraint and dies of freedom." Stay focused on the big picture.
24. *No fear or shame in the dignity of yr experience, language & knowledge*. Don't think for a moment that you are not creative enough, or not up to the task, of creating a great name – if you feel that you have "hit the wall," it probably just means that you have the wrong filters in place.
25. *Write for the world to read and see yr exact pictures of it*. You are not naming for the sake of naming, and brands don't exist in a vacuum. A name has to work in the real world, which means it should be more engaging and memorable than the names of your competition, and it should be inspiring to people.
26. *Bookmovie is the movie in words, the visual American form*. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but a great name can paint a thousand pictures in the minds of your audience.
27. *In praise of Character in the Bleak inhuman Loneliness*. Think of every great name added to the world as making the world a better place for all of us to live, and another flash of human connection illuminating the darkness.
28. *Composing wild, undisciplined, pure, coming in from under, crazier the better*. Start by following your gut, uninhibited, free, flowing (see #5 and #13, above).

29. *You're a Genius all the time*. Kerouac and Ginsberg may have been, but we're not. It never hurts, however, to think positive. Just don't get carried away with it. Ultimately a name has to support the brand positioning and work in the real world, and no amount of fist-banging declarations that you or your company or product is a "genius" will change that, or convince a skeptical client. Failure to understand this leads to delusion, and bad names. True genius is humble. Be resolute, but be humble.
30. *Writer-Director of Earthly movies Sponsored & Angeled in Heaven*. What you can put on your business card or website, if you want, once your angelic visions have been realized in live names that take the world by storm. In the meantime, keep it to yourself, get inspired, and work hard.

Academic Research Study Shows the Market Appeal of Evocative Names

In 2005 a very interesting research paper by Barbara E. Kahn, a marketing professor at the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business, and Elizabeth G. Miller, a marketing professor at Boston College, was published in the Journal of Consumer Research. Titled, "Shades of Meaning: The Effect of Color and Flavor Names on Consumer Choice," the study presents persuasive evidence that "consumers" (see Manifesto item number 35, below, for why we don't like that word) react positively to evocative names that are not descriptive, news to the researchers, perhaps, but not news to us. There is a good article about the study published on the Wharton website, *Florida Red or Moody Blue: Study Looks at Appeal of Off-beat Product Names*[13]*,* which we summarize here.

Barbara Kahn says, "The research may have strong implications for Internet marketers whose customers cannot see a product first-hand and tend to rely more on written descriptions when making purchases." What she means by this is that there is no *physical* context to products in the virtual world, and thus the emotional associations created by language have even more importance.

> In studies of jellybeans and colored sweaters, the researchers found an overall positive reaction to names that gave little information about what a flavor or product color was really like, such as Millennium orange or Snuggly white. "People jumped to the conclusion that the marketer must be telling this information for some reason," says Kahn. "They said, 'Even though I don't understand the reason, it has to be something good because marketers wouldn't tell me something that isn't good.' When they stopped and spent time on the name the assumption was that it was positive."

Kahn and Miller focus on the idea that people may attach "positive associations" to evocative words like "millennium" and "snuggly," but we think what's really going on here is that, in the context of jelly beans, those words are new, unusual, and unexpected, and thus spark an emotional connection. For a tech company, "Millennium Group" would be an expected name, and thus easily forgotten, and the same with the name "Snuggly Wash" for a detergent. But for jelly beans, they resonate, not because people feel that marketers "must be telling this information for some reason," but simply because they are different, and the human mind craves difference.

> Kahn was drawn to a study of unusual product names when she began to notice nail polish being sold under color names — such as Gunpowder — that gave no information about what the polish would actually look like.

13 http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/florida-red-or-moody-blue-study-looks-at-appeal-of-off-beat-product-names/

> Another example: the line of Gatorade Frost flavors that are sold with hard-to-imagine flavor names such as Glacier Freeze, Riptide Rush and Cascade Crash. Perhaps the ultimate in ambiguity, says Kahn, has been achieved by Crayola which uses names such as Razzmatazz and Tropical Rain Forest to describe crayons, which are nothing else if not a color. "With the nail polish there was something edgy or revolutionary," she says. "When Crayola comes out with names that don't describe the color of crayons, that is just astonishing."

It shouldn't be *that* surprising. Colors are the ultimate "virtual" product, where individual units of the physical product being sold — crayons, markers, paint — are all exactly alike, with the only variation being the color. In such cases the name of the color becomes vital in distinguishing that product from a competitor's product with the same or similar color. (See our blog post, *Colorful naming done right*[14], about a 2011 New York Times article all about the explosion of very creative, evocative color names in the house paint market.)

Here's how the researchers conducted their experiment:

> Gauging the effects of such names on consumer behavior is hard because so many other variables come in to play. So Kahn and Miller constructed controlled experiments of product names that were divided into four categories: Common, which are typical or unspecific, such as dark green or light yellow; Common Descriptive, which are typical and specific, such as pine green or lemon yellow; Unexpected Descriptive, which are atypical, but specific such as Kermit green or Rainslicker yellow; and Ambiguous, which are atypical and unspecific, such as Friendly green or Party yellow.
>
> In an initial experiment testing flavor names, 100 undergraduates were asked to complete an unrelated questionnaire on a computer. After finishing the questionnaire at the computer, the students were told they could take some jellybeans. The jellybeans were in six cups each with a sign attached listing the flavor. Half the subjects saw jellybean names that were common descriptives: blueberry blue, cherry red, chocolate brown, marshmallow white, tangerine orange and watermelon green. The other half saw flavors with ambiguous names: Moody blue, Florida red, Mississippi brown, white Ireland, Passion orange and Monster green. Researchers observed that the less common names were more popular.
>
> As part of the experiment, some subjects were distracted by questions about the computer survey as they selected their jellybeans. In those cases, there was no preference for the unusually named flavors. That suggested that the decision to go with the less common name is a cognitive response indicating a person puts at least some thought into the decision.

14 http://www.zinzin.com/observations/2011/colorful-naming-done-right/

Aha! There is the key: *the decision to go with the less common name is a cognitive response indicating a person puts at least some thought into the decision* — unexpected evocative and metaphorical names require a person to put some thought into "decoding" them, and the result is that a strong new memory is formed. This is why evocative names are so much more memorable than descriptive names; why "Amazon" is memorable and "Book World" is not. This is called "incongruency theory," and was also tested specifically by the researchers as part of this study. Incongruency theory posits that, "people make judgments by evaluating new encounters against existing expectations. When encounters are incongruent with prior expectations, individuals put in more effort to resolve the incongruency." Again, we says a resounding "YES!" — a primary reason for the power of unexpected names is that the effort required to "resolve the incongruency" cements a name in memory.

> …if the name is uninformative because it is atypical, consumers will search for the reason the particular adjective was selected as described by incongruency theory. The result of this additional elaboration is increased satisfaction with the product." Kahn says some consumers seem to enjoy figuring out the names and feel smart when an obscure, but clever name clicks in their mind.
>
> As the researchers note in their paper, "When consumers encounter an unfamiliar name which is counter to their expectation that the marketer would be providing a familiar name, they try to determine how the adjective describes the color/flavor. If they discover the connection, the consumer may congratulate himself for solving the problem, resulting in positive affect. The most positive affect should result when the name is mildly incongruent."
>
> Although she did not test for it, Kahn says there is probably a point where strong incongruency would backfire, leaving consumers frustrated with meaningless names and leading to negative product response.

Yes, there is such a point, and that point is when a name, no matter how potentially interesting and powerful in and of itself, is too far removed from the brand positioning of the product, company or service. To be effective, names have to map to and reinforce the brand positioning — if they "go rogue" and fail to do that, they are then just perceived as random. People, ultimately, enjoy and identify with stories, and mapping to a well-defined brand positioning is how to Tell A Good Story with a name.

This is a fascinating research study that we believe validates what we have observed anecdotally and have put into practice for years. The researchers, however, come up a little short in their conclusion:

> Kahn says the use of odd names seems to work best in products that rely on the senses, such as food or fashion, and would probably not work in a high-

> stakes product category such as healthcare or financial services. And at some point, she says, the advantage of an odd or unexpected name will wear off. "Over time, people get used to it. I don't think people have this reaction to Gatorade Frost anymore," she says. "It isn't an effect that's going to last forever unless the company keeps coming up with new names."

We beg to differ. Just look at the success we've had creating memorable, lasting brand names in the two sectors Kahn mentions, *Healthcare/Medical/Pharma Names*[15] and *B2B/Enterprise/Industrial Names*[16] which includes the financial sector. The strongest, most powerful names work over time not by conforming to a temporary trick of perception, but by tapping into the collective memory and imagination, and creating an emotional bond with individual people that remains long after the Millennium orange or Snuggly white has been used up.

15 http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/healthcare-medical-pharma-names/
16 http://www.zinzin.com/work/naming/b2b-enterprise-industrial-names/

A Guide to Evaluating Naming Agencies

A handy guide for evaluating naming agencies, with everything you need to know to help you choose the perfect agency.

Stephen King wrote, "The scariest moment in writing is just before you start." For many companies, the prospect of hiring a naming agency is filled with nearly as much uncertainty as the process of naming itself. We want you to feel confident with your selection of a naming agency, so we've put together this handy guide. Here are a few things to consider:

Naming Portfolio

Check out the agency's portfolio of company and product names. Have they created names that resonate with you and that you find inspiring? Are these names that you would be proud to have for your own company or product? And has the naming agency demonstrated the ability to create a range of name types? Have they created names across a range of industries, and for companies all over the world?

Naming Process

Does the agency have a battle-tested process for creating great names? Is the agency's process transparent and easy to understand, or is it missing in action or hidden behind a proprietary TM-branded "black box" methodology? Is it intuitive to regular humans? Or is it riddled with alienating biz-speak and obfuscating consultant diagrams?

Naming Philosophy

Does the agency have a clear and compelling philosophy of naming? Is their philosophy and process unique, or does it sound like most every other naming agency? Do you get the sense that they live and breathe naming? Does it seem like they enjoy their job?

Personal Chemistry

Do you get the sense that working with this agency will be an enjoyable experience? Do they have an interactive process that encourages and demands your involvement and input? Are they good listeners? Do they have a sense of humor? Can you get company principals on the phone to discuss your project, and are they helpful, or are you routed to "account rep" intermediaries? When you talk to them, can you sense their passion for naming and their excitement for *your* project? Or do they seem like they're just phoning

it in? Do they give you a sense that, crazy as it may seem if you've gone a few rounds with the trademark office, that naming can actually be fun?

The Agency's Own Name

A naming agency's own name is the ultimate test. It's very much like the scene in *Being John Malkovich* where Malkovich goes inside his own head. This might as well be documentary footage of a naming agency naming itself:

[Video: https://youtu.be/Q6Fuxkinhug]

Is the naming agency's own name any good? Does it tell a story? Does it rise above the goods and services being offered? Has the agency invested it with meaning and built a strong brand identity for themselves? And as with any brand name, does it pass the T-shirt test of looking great, all by itself, on a T-shirt, hat, or signage?

Industry Position

Is the agency a thought leader, or a follower? Are they talking about the same things in the same way as all other naming companies, or do they offer a fresh perspective? Do they have strong opinions that they are not afraid to share? Do they engage in *conversations*, or is it mostly just one-way marketing chatter that's all about them and how awesome they are?

Time to Get Engaged

What is the *essence*, the core value, of your brand? What is the core value of any company you hire, for naming, graphic identity, or advertising? Because it's no longer enough for brands just to shout messages for B2C or even B2B "consumers" to digest — brands, companies, and of course naming agencies must be *engaged* with their audience, society in general, and the world we all live in.

Below is a great clip of Steve Jobs answering the question of what is the *core* of Apple's brand. He was introducing the "Think Different" marketing campaign in a talk he gave to Apple employees in the late 1990s. The quality of this video is poor, but the message is spot-on: these are the kinds of things you should be thinking about on your journey toward a company or product name, whether you are a large company or startup looking to hire a naming agency, or a small company or individual doing naming yourself. This is the essence of what Simon Sinek captures brilliantly in his Start With Why Ted talk and book. [Video: https://youtu.be/u4ZoJKF_VuA]

Steve Jobs on Apple's Core Value (puns always intended!)

[Video: https://youtu.be/TNYbcqyyj68]

Here is a transcript of the most salient parts of Jobs' talk:

This is a very complicated world, it's a very noisy world, and we're not going to get a chance to get people to remember much about us — no company is. And so we have to be really clear on what we want 'em to know about us.

Even a great brand needs investment, and caring, if its going to retain its relevance and vitality.

Our customers want to know who is Apple, and what is it that we stand for? Where do we fit in this world? And what we're about isn't making boxes for people to get their job done — although we do that well, we do that better than almost anybody in some cases. But Apple's about something more than that. Apple at the core, its core value, is that we believe that people with passion *can* change the world for the better. That's what we believe. … And we believe that in this world, people can change it for the better. And that those people that are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones that actually do.

Cut Through the Noise

It's a very noisy world, and we're not going to get a chance to get people to remember much about us — no company is. This is why your company or product brand name is so vitally important. No amount of expensive marketing or advertising will can win over potential customers if they don't notice you to begin with. And by definition nobody will remember you if your name is forgettable. The goal should always be to stand out in this *noisy* world.

When the time comes to choose a naming agency to help craft the single most important piece of branding you will ever do as a company, make sure that the agency understands the importance of cutting *through the noise*, and has a process in place and a track record of doing just that. Otherwise they might just build you a glossy new pedestal to display your vision in a museum of dead brands that are all indistinguishable from one another.

The Zinzin Naming & Branding Manifesto

This Manifesto represents a distillation of our core philosophy about naming and branding. Welcome to the conversation.

1. Let there be names.

T.S. Eliot wrote that the world will end with a whimper, not a bang. Perhaps. But it began most evocatively with a Big Bang. Did the Big Bang know itself by that name as it was happening? Doubtful – the name came much later. In our world today, however, everything begins with a name. As you embark on the adventure of naming your company or product, you have the opportunity to create a Big Bang or a little whimper. Do the right thing – make a Big Bang.

2. Grunts, squeals & crude vocalizations.

Communication began with grunts and squeals, crude vocalizations, painted images and a lot of hand waving. From this names evolved to identify the bison to be hunted or the ideal cave for shelter and ceremony. Names are the beginning of language, and from language sprang culture and civilization. But it all began with a name, and it's a good bet that the first name was probably "I". *I* am hungry. *I* want you. *I* need a new name for my cave painting business. The first "iBrand."

3. Name, rank and serial number.

For too many people and companies, a name is merely an identifier, a functional string of letters or numbers with little brand value. This is the baseline, primordial meaning and function of a name. As Wittgenstein puts it, "A name cannot be dissected any further by means of a definition: it is a primitive sign." The question is, what more can a name do for you? Quite a few things, actually, once you move beyond the primitive notion that names are merely descriptive, functional signs.

4. Language is alive and on the move.

The way we write and speak today would have made people living in the 17th century, never mind Neanderthals, think us aliens from a far off galaxy. Things change, culture changes, languages are born and die, names come and go – today's "Google" is not your grandfather's "International Business Machines."

If you're looking for stability, go somewhere else. Language is on the move. It is a living, breathing organism, always changing, morphing, evolving. Don't fear this change – revel in it.

5. Language is dirty.

Language is messy. It is governed by rules that are often broken and riddled with exceptions that give it life. In order to create the best possible name for a company, product, baby, horse, character, or other, you have to be willing to do anything and go anywhere with language. Nothing is sacred. Language is alive, and life is messy.

When mucking about with language, don't be afraid to get your hands dirty.

6. Language is dead, long live language.

Language is the fruit fly's view of evolution – rapid change, mutation, morphogenesis. It is capable of being influenced, molded, formed, deformed and reformed before our eyes and ears. It is a mutant made to be torn asunder and reconfigured.

As William S. Burroughs wrote, "Language is a virus from outer space." We all have the capacity to be language biologists, creating new life from the wreckage of old text.

7. Born of science, transformed into art.

Great names are born from a specific process approaching science in its rigor, but the result is pure art. From competitive analysis to brand strategy, positioning, name development, trademark prescreening, linguistic connotation screening, name evaluation and adoption, there's much more to successful naming than pizza, beer, a thesaurus and frenetic whiteboard scribbling. The goal of all this hard work is an evocative name with the power to set minds reeling, ignite conversations, spur involvement, create brand loyalty, and become embedded in memory.

8. Does the carpet match the drapes?

We talk a lot about brand positioning and how important it is, so let's define our terms. Simply put, the positioning of a brand is the set of core messages the brand demonstrates to the world, through tone, personality, emotion and narrative. So a better way to think about your task is in these terms: you are not naming a company or product – you are instead naming the *positioning* of a company or product. Once you determine the brand positioning, only consider names that map strongly to that positioning. In fact, any names you consider *must* support the brand positioning in order to be successful.

9. Slay dragon, heal earth, reach nirvana.

What feelings do you want your target audience to associate with your company or product? Do you want them feel that they are creative, "outside the box" individualists (Apple)? Part of a large, connected tribe (Facebook)? Empowered to push themselves beyond what they think they are physically capable of (Nike)? Which archetypes – The Hero, The Great Mother, The Mentor, The Guardian, The Herald, The Shadow, The Trickster – does your brand most closely align with? Discover the epic ideas behind your brand and they will lead to your unique story and positioning.

10. Show me, don't tell me.

Great names demonstrate your brand positioning. Weak names force you to explain your brand positioning, and that's called advertising. It is very expensive, and not nearly as effective as demonstrating. Bear this in mind when considering the cost of a naming project; money saved now may cost you much more in future advertising expenses.

11. Don't be hogtied by arbitrary filters.

If the perfect name for your product is "Blue," but you have a naming convention that only considers geometric shapes and sounds, not colors, then you have an arbitrary filter in place that is limiting the names you can even consider. The only filter that matters is the *Supports The Positioning* filter – all other filters, like "the name needs to be serious" or "it should start with a letter A" are arbitrary, exclusionary, and will lead you into a morass of bad name choices.

12. You can get it if you really want.

Clients often say to us that they got stuck when trying to name a company or product themselves because they are "not creative enough." We tell them, no, you are just as creative as us or anyone else, but your problem is that you have the wrong filters in place. The key is to focus on the *positioning* of your brand, and then look for names that best support that positioning, being careful not to filter out potential naming directions or, conversely, to allow anything and everything through.

13. When was the last time you enjoyed naming?

While there are definitely parts of a naming project that can be hard, challenging work – trademark screening, due-diligence research, linguistic connotation screening, domain checking, etc. – the actual name generation, discussion and deliberation should be engaging, thought-provoking, cathartic, stimulating, argumentative, enlightening, and just plain fun. You are creating a name that ideally will function as a very concise poem and catch fire out in the wider world. It's a rush.

And yes, naming should be fun.

14. Misery is no mother.

Just because naming should be fun, doesn't mean it always is. But it's important that you have an open mind and allow yourself to be alive to the possibilities of what a name can do. You have to set a positive tone for this exercise right from the start – if you're stuck in a miserable naming rut and the experience seems like torture, realize that you are doing something wrong, and change your approach. Companies and products are not born from misery or ennui, and neither are the best names.

15. In celebration of all the milquetoast mousey wimps.

When naming, it never works to act out of fear. If you *want* to blend in with the competition and go unnoticed by the public at large, that's easy enough to achieve. But if you are positioning your company as a bold, adventurous risk-taking revolutionary, and you are afraid to adopt a name that supports such bold positioning, then your brand is in trouble — the public will see through your attempts to be "bold" if you lead with a weak name. So don't wimp out; let your name be as powerful as your vision.

16. The risky business of risking business.

When naming, companies often make a fundamental mistake about the nature of risk. The faulty assumption is that they need a descriptive name in order to "describe what they do," or what their product does, because they "don't have a huge marketing budget" to do this describing. In other words, an evocative name that doesn't "describe what they do" is considered too "risky."

This kind of thinking is prevalent across all industries, and it's also completely wrong. That's because a powerful name will create brand awareness, get the press to write about it, generate word-of-mouth buzz, engage with your audience and convert them to fanatic devotees of your brand. The generic descriptive name, on the other hand, will drown in a sea of sound-alike clones, and you'll end up having to pay a lot more money for advertising in a vain attempt to get the brand noticed by your glazed-over audience.

It may seem counterintuitive, but it's true: in terms of the bottom line, "safe" names are risky and it's the "edgy" names that are actually a much safer choice, because of what they can do for your brand and the value they'll create.

17. Own the conversation.

The greatest brands are emotionally engaging, thought-provoking, absolutely original and tend to upend industries. They are not me-too wannabes, struggling to get a word in edgewise. Rather, they own the conversation in their market. This kind of dominance is what product developers aspire to, but sadly the naming of a revolutionary product or company often gets short shrift. Don't let that happen to you. A name can and should dominate an industry as much as a company or product. Aim high.

18. Let your freak flag fly.

It's a very simple calculus: if your competitors are all doing the same thing, then you will stand out if you do something different. And the first and most visible point of differentiation is with your name. That's why every naming project should begin with a thorough understanding of the competitive landscape. Look for all the obvious and subtle ways in which your competitors do and say the same thing, and then find a new, uncharted place to plant your flag.

19. Burn your thesaurus.

Consulting a thesaurus is the first stop on the naming train for most people, who think that finding the right synonym will lead to the perfect name. It won't, because it's already been done to death. Go deep instead – immerse yourself in art, read poetry and literature, study science. If you want an uncommon name, surround yourself with uncommon sources. Each competitor of yours that chooses a boringly "appropriate" name from a thesaurus is doing you a great favor.

20. Turbulent seas.

We live in a culture with so many signals coming at us so quickly, that most messages, including brand names, just get buried in the avalanche of tweets, calls to action, toll-free numbers, friend requests, dinner conversations, infomercials, podcasts, IMs, talking heads, talking points, advertorials and webinars. Everyone is in a hurry all the time, with advertisers and content providers often accelerating their signals to stay "up to speed" and lodge their nuggets of information into our minds before competing messages can take root. In this cultural feeding frenzy, individual messages can easily be lost. Notice an opportunity here?

21. Shelter from the storm.

The key to getting noticed in the turbulent sea of cultural messages is not to speed up, but to slow down. If your name can disrupt someone's ordinary routine, they will stop and pay attention. Perhaps only for a few seconds, but sometimes that's all it takes to create an initial engagement with a brand. In a world where everything is fast, it's only natural that slowing down perception can be a major point of differentiation.

22. A word that paints a thousand pictures.

Old cliches never die, but they can often be turned inside-out. So while it's true that a picture might be worth a thousand words, a great name is a word or two that can paint a thousand pictures in the minds of your audience. If you want proof of this, hand a few leading names over to your graphics team to play around with. If they come back to you with, "We had so many ideas for what we could do with this one," it's likely a strong name.

23. I yam what I yam.

Keep your names, messaging and language real. Don't talk down to people. Don't insult the intelligence of your customers by condescending to them. Be real, genuine, honest, transparent, helpful, understanding, and authentic — you can't fake it, and you can't advertise it. You must *demonstrate* these qualities, and since a name is the most prominent part of a company's brand image, you have to begin by not accepting empty, phony language into your company or product names.

24. Difruhnt, but not *that* different.

If your name is different for the sake of being different or extreme in any way just for the sake of being extreme, then it is doomed. The most powerful names are those that best support the brand positioning, no matter what, and depending on the circumstances, a name might be "extreme" or it might not. If your name is trying too hard to be different just in order to stand out, it won't — it will blend in with all the other names that are also trying too hard, and failing, to stand out. *Vive la différence*.

25. 1.39 million very unique solutions.

When creating a brand name or any collateral messaging, avoid vacant, overused words like "solutions." A quick web search will confirm that you can find a solution for nearly every problem, except perhaps for the problem of having too many "solutions." Other empty vessels include "network," "business," "business solutions," "leading provider" ("leading" anything, for that matter), or the ultimate, "a leading provider of business solutions." Search that last phrase in Google, in quotes, and weep (1.39 million tears).

26. Beware of geeks bearing gifts.

Beware "experts" who cloak their methodology in the jargony garb of fancy proprietary "black box" naming "solutions." Naming is hard work, and to do it right requires focus, passion and persistence, but rocket surgery it is not. If a consultant has a rigorous process for creating names, they shouldn't be afraid to share that with the whole world. You're better off hiring a couple bright high school students than an MBA wielding a Magic 8-Ball.

27. Visualize your arch rival's smirk.

When evaluating the names on your shortlist, perform this little thought experiment: imagine that your fiercest competitor has just re-branded, and their new name is one of the names you are considering (try it with each name).

Which of the names would drive you most crazy with envy when, as you visualize it to the fullest, the smug CEO of Arch Rival, Inc., unveils their amazing new name to the world, the press writes stories about it, the blogosphere lights up, and the social media channels buzz like caffeinated honeybees? Conjure up as much painful detail as you can – really wallow in it.

This exercise will very quickly point the way to the best name on your list. And if none of the names would bother you if launched by a competitor, then go back to the drawing board until you have a name that does. It is often easier to imagine a competitor choosing a particular name than your own company choosing it, because the Arch Rival name adoption fantasy is divorced from your own internal debates and politics.

28. Focus groups can't save you now.

Many a troubled naming project began with a brainstorming session, but it's possible to do brainstorming right and add value to your naming process. Use this opportunity to get outside of yourself and hear divergent opinions; avoid being restricted by internal naming filters, preconceptions, or office politics; consider suggestions as concepts as much as potential names; and don't get emotionally invested in any given name before it has been properly trademark screened. A well-run brainstorming session can give everyone on your team the discourse and information needed to propagate, nurture and support strong names.

29. Like snowflakes in a blizzard.

Invented names made from morphemic mashups are often praised for being "completely unique, unlike anything else that is out there." While this might be technically true, such names are only unique in the same way that every snowflake is unique; in a blizzard, however, the uniqueness of an individual snowflake disappears. The same thing happens when "unique" mashup names join the real world *brand blizzard* – they vanish from sight, indistinguishable from one another.

30. Sibilants, plosives & fricatives oh my.

The lesson of snowflakes is to never confuse structural uniqueness – the "genetic code" of an individual name, its unique sequence of letters – with semantic uniqueness, its "uniqueness of meaning." Any name has meaning on some level – witness the linguist's parade of sibilants, plosives and fricatives that often accompanies a new name unveiling. The trick is to create names that are *meaningful*, not just names that have meaning.

31. Measure your ingredients carefully.

One issue to resolve when looking at a product naming strategy is when and to what extent does it make sense to engage in *ingredient branding* – naming individual technology components, such as GM's "OnStar" navigation system, or PCs with "Intel Inside." This is a tricky and nuanced area of branding to get right, and to avoid brand dilution it is important to strike a balance and only name ingredients when it makes sense to turn them into powerful sub-brands. Don't go on a naming spree just for the hell of it.

32. Frozen in the amber of brand equity.

When a successful brand has years of positive history and stories behind it, that is known as *brand equity*, which is something to be treasured and nurtured. But if a brand has been struggling, has grown tired, or has been damaged, its brand equity might better be described as *baggage*. If you have a successful brand in spite of a poor name, a new, powerful name can only help, and your customers will gladly follow your lead. But if your brand has fallen on hard times, then you have no real brand equity to worry about – you've got nothing to lose, and you're free to reinvent the brand.

33. Got them domain domination blues.

Don't be discouraged by the difficulty of securing a domain name, and don't let domains dictate your choice of names. It's far better to have a great brand name with a compound word modified domain than a weak name with an exact-match domain. Thanks to Google and social media, your brand can be easily discovered regardless of its Web address. The brand should always have priority over the domain name; the only exception being Internet pure-play companies, where the brand and the domain are one.

34. We don’t need no stinking demographics.

It’s not enough to just “produce” products for “consumers” to consume. You need to foster engagement with your audience. Live in the big world and be a part of it, treat individuals with consideration, and be open, transparent and helpful. That includes creating brand names that respect your audience’s intelligence, are entertaining, memorable, and add value to the culture. Never forget that it’s individual people, not demographics, who buy your products. People like you.

35. Rise up, zombie mall rats, rise!

The word “consumer,” meant to describe your audience or the people who buy your products, is demeaning and should be banished. In the old days it made sense: you put out a product, advertised it, and then the “consumers” would come along, shell out their money, and consume your product. Today, the pool of people who mindlessly “consume” brands is ever shrinking. With so much competition, people expect a deeper emotional connection and dialog with brands. Ignore this at your peril.

36. Tell a good story.

Stories are how we connect with each other, and how people become emotionally engaged with brands. Successful brands tell the most and the most compelling stories. Since your name is the face of your brand, names that tell stories are much more powerful than names that don’t. Part of that story value comes from what is inherent in a name before you adopt it, and part of that value comes after, with the stories you create and invest in your brand.

Storytelling never ends — it’s how you turn a name that might belong to any company or product into a brand that can only belong to you.

Epilogue. Coda. Last words. And a call to action.

Great names are not a given. They don't just happen. They have to be created, advocated for, argued about, pushed through corporate resistance. They tend to polarize naming committees, who are adept at coming up with powerful and persuasive arguments why they should be rejected. All valid reasons why there are so few really outstanding brand names. But also an opportunity.

We created this Manifesto to empower everybody who is interested in creating powerful names. It is a living, breathing document that we will revise and update whenever we have more to say. We invite you to join the conversation and help bring great names into the world.

To be continued...

Selected Naming Case Studies

On the following pages is a selection of Zinzin naming case studies. You can read all case studies in the Portfolio section of our website: http://www.zinzin.com/work/. On the website you can filter the Case Studies with the following sidebar navigation options:

Case Studies By Entity
All Case Studies
Company Names
Product Names
Service Names
Name Change
Startups

Case Studies By Industry
App Names
B2B / Enterprise / Industrial Names
Consumer Product Names
Eco / Environmental Names
Education / Training Names
Electronics Hardware Names
Entertainment Names
Financial Names
Food / Beverage Names
Healthcare / Medical / Pharma Names
Hotel / Hospitality Names
Software Names
Technology Names
Television Network Names
Websites / E-Commerce Names

Case Studies By Type
Evocative Names
Experiential Names
Invented Names

Case Studies By Client
Clients

Clutch

PROJECT: Rebrand a business vendor research firm and website that has published research and reviews of B2B companies in over 50 markets and is poised for rapid growth.

CLUTCH: Essential in a critical situation: *He is a good man in the clutch*. A collection of things or persons to be handled together. Slang: great, awesome, cool.

BRAND POSITIONING: SourcingLine, a research firm that offers independent, quantitative analysis on leading services firms in support of procurement decisions, came to us with two requirements for their re-branding initiative: 1) Develop a killer brand name to replace their current *vaguely descriptive wait till we get funding camel-case mashup placeholder solution*; and 2) make sure that all names presented have exact-match .com or .co domain names that are parked and available for purchase.

For the company that delivers the go-to source of actionable business intelligence on B2B service companies, we *came through in the clutch*, with Clutch, a name that maps perfectly to the company's hybrid approach to vendor sourcing: a blend of what top research firms provide at a high price point with the cost (free) and ease of use of consumer review sites and apps. The name Clutch maps perfectly to the brand proposition that this is the *driving mechanism* that connects people with the best in class services that they seek, a deep resource for business intelligence that comes through for companies *in the Clutch* to deliver the best B2B service providers. Also, the ".co" top-level domain further reinforces that this is all about connecting companies to do business together. Clutch. Firms that deliver.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"The Zinzin team got our strategy and competitive environment immediately. They then elevated our thinking about our brand and provided a range of great naming options. What more could you ask?"

—Founder, Clutch

Several of our fantastic clients have been interviewed by Clutch researchers for reviews about their experience working with us, which you can read in full on our Clutch profile page – *https://clutch.co/profile/zinzin* – or download a nicely-formatted PDF of all our client Clutch reviews on our Resources page: *http://www.zinzin.com/naming-guides-company-product-names/*.

Highwire

PROJECT: Rename the company that began as an internal risk assessment system at Harvard University and rose to become the Partner Elevation movement for builders and owners of capital projects.

HIGHWIRE

HIGHWIRE: From the idiom “a high wire act,” used figuratively to refer to something that is difficult or dangerous.

BRAND POSITIONING: When the folks at ConstructSecure came to Zinzin, they wanted a new company name to reflect its broader, industry-transforming mission: to help builders and owners of capital projects succeed by *elevating* the capabilities of their partners to deliver great work.

The name Zinzin created, Highwire, succeeds at the delicate *balancing act* of representing this innovative company and its capabilities on multiple levels. Highwire figuratively refers to doing something with inherent danger or risk, such as capital project construction and risk mitigation. However, the name Highwire also connotes connectivity (with partners), elevation (within the industry), and great anticipation (of things to come). Highwire or “a highwire act” is something that often inspires us to reach new heights with great feats of skill and courage — things that define this company as it works to elevate an entire industry.

Regarding the company’s new name and its broader mission, Garrett Burke, Founder and President of Highwire, said,

“The world’s most advanced builders and operators have embraced the Partner Elevation mindset and have fundamentally changed the way they collaborate with their contracting partners. It’s a surreal moment to think about everything we’ve accomplished. And even more surreal to think that this is just the beginning.”

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

“Zinzin has the discipline to remain focused on naming and naming only, which makes them the best. We love our new name. It has helped with sales and recruiting.”

—CEO, Highwire

Antimatter

PROJECT: Name a company and its technology infrastructure that's revolutionizing how B2B SaaS solves data security and privacy requirements.

ANTIMATTER: A form of matter that is identical to ordinary matter except that it is composed of antielectrons (positrons), antiprotons, and antineutrons. It is believed to exist in the farthest reaches of the universe and is rare on Earth.

BRAND POSITIONING: This stealth mode startup needed a name as groundbreaking and, frankly, as cool as its work. Backed by leading investors, the founders hired Zinzin to name the company and its infrastructure service for B2B SaaS that's designed to fundamentally change the face of data security worldwide. In other words, they want companies and people to have control over their own data no matter where it is.

To solve the challenge of B2B SaaS and its developers to meet growing customer demand for data privacy, the company offers a comprehensive solution that seamlessly "slides" into existing infrastructure or code. It not only saves time and money, but also provides customers with provable guarantees of data security and privacy.

The name Zinzin created, Antimatter, connotes the future-forward, creative, and complex elegance of game-changing technology, science, and design. With this new "invisible layer" of data security that "slides" into place, Antimatter transparently encrypts customer data. Even though we can't see it, Antimatter exists; the proof is in our universe of smarter technology. Says Antimatter co-founder Andrew Krioukov:

> "Until recently, this was impossible. But with our six years of applied cryptography and distributed authorization research, and new secure enclave technology becoming widely available in the cloud, we can now give enterprise customers provable control over their data in cloud applications."

Antimatter provably secures customer data in B2B SaaS.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"We were really pleased with the name, and there were a lot of other great options on the shortlist. I don't think we would have been able to come up with such a great choice without Zinzin's expertise and experience. They were able to reframe how we were thinking, which was helpful, as we come from a more technical background."

—Co-Founder, Data Security Company (Antimatter)

Limbo

PROJECT: Name a health and wellness startup company and its advanced wearable technology.

LIMBO: An intermediate situation or state defined by uncertainty. Limbo is also a fun and participatory dance from the Caribbean in which people bend backward and go under a stick that is moved lower as the dance continues.

BRAND POSITIONING: The visionary leadership team at Limbo hired Zinzin to name their new company and its advanced wearable technology platform. The name Zinzin created, Limbo, evokes the unique, complex, and ultimately optimistic nature of this game-changing brand.

Limbo is a powerful name with great multiple meanings. On the one hand, Limbo is a quintessential *liminal space*, such as the *limbo* between being fit and being unhealthy. In the past being in a "state of limbo" often meant having no control over a situation. Limbo the brand leverages this *creative friction* to turn that notion on its head, giving people full control over their wellness journey. Limbo is also, of course, a festive *dance* that is all about *controlled movement*, fun, and community.

With a combination of *biodata* and *behavioral psychology* that drives nudges to change a person's behavior, Limbo helps its users establish new habits, which ultimately lead to transformation. Small changes add up to lasting habits when you stay "in Limbo."

The name Limbo is short and sweet, with a great look, feel, and sound; a friendly and unforgettable name that reflects both the challenges and optimism of a brand that can change lives forever.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"When changing the name of a company, it's hard to tell immediately what the effect will be. However, 98% of the people we've told about the name change have been very positive about it. We constantly get compliments and praise for what an interesting, unique, and cool name we have.

"Zinzin's biggest strength is how good they are at their job in their specialist industry. While someone may get lucky with a name by asking random people on the street, going to the world's best specialists was the best course of action for us since we wanted to do things well. Zinzin pushed us until we got something fantastic because they had outstanding creative brains and processes to get good results."

—Rurik Bradbury, CEO, Limbo

Quilt

PROJECT: Rename a startup company and its advanced ductless heat pump technology that's transforming home climate control to build a better, cleaner, more comfortable future.

QUILT: A coverlet for a bed, made of two layers of fabric with some soft substance, as wool or down, between them and stitched in patterns or tufted through all thicknesses in order to prevent the filling from shifting. A bedspread or counterpane, especially a thick one. Anything quilted or resembling a quilt. To stitch together (two pieces of cloth and a soft interlining), usually in an ornamental pattern. To sew up between pieces of material. To make quilts or quilted work.

BRAND POSITIONING: This smart, passionate, home electrification startup comprised of ex-Googlers came to us with Abri as their placeholder name. They were looking for a new name to better reflect their innovative product and imperative mission: to migrate humanity off fossil fuel heating.

As the company says, we humans have been burning things to keep us warm for over a million years; moving beyond fire is a species-level revolution. Leading this revolution is their ductless heat pump technology. It's all about modern, electric, home climate control. It's also all about demonstrating the ease and comfort that this technology provides.

The name we created, Quilt, is an evocative, "warm and fuzzy," human-centric, *homey* name that exemplifies a merger of *form* (design/aesthetics), *function* (warmth, comfort, ease of use), and *science* (baffles, insulation, layers). It also maps metaphorically to the networked home, where individual heat pumps and other devices are "stitched together" to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, a beautiful and sustaining "big picture" piece of "functional art."

Kudos to our client, who seized the opportunity to create nice creative friction between their high-tech products of the future and the "down home," familiar quality of this new name.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"From the start, Zinzin told us about their standard process and the project plan. They told us how long the project would take, what they would do every week, and how much the project would cost, and they delivered exactly as expected. We're very happy with the name that Zinzin helped us come up with, and people have complimented us on it as well."
—CEO, Quilt

Kantata

PROJECT: Name a company formed by the merger and integration of two companies, Mavenlink and Kimble, to be the Global Supplier of Purpose-Built Technology for Professional Services Organizations.

KANTATA: Inspired by *cantata*, originally a musical composition intended to be sung, as opposed to a sonata, a composition played instrumentally; now, loosely, any work for voices and instruments. A medium-length narrative piece of music for voices with instrumental accompaniment, typically with solos, chorus, and orchestra. Origin: from Italian *cantare*, "to sing."

BRAND POSITIONING: Merger naming and branding is one of the hardest things to pull off successfully. Zinzin applauds Mavenlink and Kimble Applications — they did it! And we were thrilled to name their newly merged company.

We knew the name needed to be as powerful and innovative as their goal: to accelerate the development and adoption of purpose-built Vertical SaaS solutions for professional services organizations.

Inspired by Canata, Kantata is an elegant name with a great look, feel, and sound that connotes efficiency, collaboration, and *dynamic* harmony. With Kantata, a professional services firm's business processes can be *artfully* blended to *weave* solos, chorus, and orchestra together into a seamless narrative and a beautiful *song*.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"We retained Zinzin to help us create a new company name following the Q421 merger of two suppliers in our space. Both suppliers had well known and respected company names and brands in the industry. ... With Zinzin's help, we went from project initiation to a full-name and brand launch in roughly four months. We didn't think this timing was possible when we started, but we did set this goal and were able to hit it. ... Zinzin has strong convictions around good company naming and also the best processes for creating a new company name."

—CMO, Kantata

Truffle

PROJECT: Name an online and app-based platform with a dual-mission: to simplify the process of finding high-quality childcare services that satisfy both the parents' and child's needs, and to give childcare facilities the visibility that they deserve.

TRUFFLE: Any of various edible fungi, chiefly of the genus Tuber, that grow underground on or near the roots of trees and are valued as a delicacy. Any of various chocolate confections, especially one made of a mixture including chopped nuts, rolled into balls and covered with cocoa powder. The truffle pig is a domestic pig used for locating and extracting a type of fungus known as truffles from temperate forests in Europe and North America. The pigs have a good sense of smell and are able to identify truffles from as deep as three feet underground. They are trained to hunt truffles by walking on a leash through suitable groves with a keeper.

BRAND POSITIONING: Truffles are a rare and highly valuable delicacy. Like a helpful truffle pig, Truffle gives you a *sixth sense* or superhuman ability to see the hidden morsels of the highest quality daycare options and opportunities that are invisible to people without this app. Truffle empowers users to *root-out* important information and form deeper, more meaningful connections between parents, daycare centers, and childcare providers.

Truffle is a fun, playful, and memorable name for this unique and empowering app, with great brand icon potential via the truffle pig.

Truffle: The one-stop online platform to find trusted childcare facilities for drop in or long-term services.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"We recently released the platform and have received very positive feedback from everyone who has been in touch with it. They say that the name resonates very well with the childcare industry. Overall, the naming process was a success, so I'm very thrilled that I decided to work with Zinzin. The name gave us the initial boost we needed as a startup, and everything worked well in the end."

—Hon Trang, Founder of Truffle

Quantic

PROJECT: Name the world's only accredited mobile-first graduate school, "The Business School of the Future."

QUANTIC: In mathematics, a rational, integral, homogeneous function of two or more variables. An old name for the mathematical concept of algebraic form.

BRAND POSITIONING: Pedago, founded in 2013, is out to change how we all learn. To help them achieve that goal, they hired Zinzin to rename their new "mobile-first" MBA program, the "graduate school of the future." The original name for this program was "Smartly," which worked well to position the school as modern and "mobile-first," but lacked *gravitas* as an institution of higher learning that would forever exist on the diplomas and CVs of its graduates and had to work in professional business settings.

The name we created, Quantic, is a cool, techy name that grounds these MBA programs in the gravitas of the *quantifiable*, of objective truth. It has a range of associations from *quantum* physics to mathematics to financial *quantitative* analyst "quants," and perfectly posititions the school to be the leader in 21st century graduate business education.

Here's what Quantic says on their website:

> Quantic School of Business and Technology has reimagined business education. It brings the MBA curriculum to the modern era, with bite-size lessons optimized for a mobile world. Quantic students are high-achieving leaders with limitless potential, eager to make a difference. Paying for the privilege of recruiting in the network, our partner companies help enable our innovative tuition model, keeping Quantic radically affordable to all accepted students.

Welcome to Quantic, The Business School of the Future.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"Students in our program are proud to put our name on their LinkedIn profile and resume. We've also seen an increase in applications when we changed our name and became accredited."
—Director of Marketing, Quantic

Juno

PROJECT: Name a new technology process for recycling up to 90% of what we are currently burying and burning.

JUNO: The most important goddess of the Roman state, wife of Jupiter, queen of heaven, and goddess of light, the moon, birth, women, and marriage, and was the protector of the state.

BRAND POSITIONING: Every year approximately 2 billion tons of waste — 170 million tons in the U.S. alone — ends up in landfills or incinerators. Much of this is paper and plastic that could be recycled but isn't because it's contaminated or difficult to separate. Georgia-Pacific developed a proprietary process that first sanitizes waste in a specialized, heated chamber to remove contaminants; then separates the valuable materials — mostly paper fibers, plastics and metals — which are then suitable for recycling; and finally converts the organic material into biogas that can be used in a variety of applications.

Georgia-Pacific hired Zinzin to name this revolutionary new recycling technology. The name had to be short, iconic, and brandable as both a technology process and as an "eco" ingredient brand along the lines of the ubiquitous recycling logo. The name we created, Juno, achieves these goals and more, as it is a name with deep mythological resonance that speaks to the brand's strong commitment to protecting the safety and welfare of "Mother Earth." Short, sweet, and approachable, Juno embodies the perfect balance of gentle nurturing and goddess-like powers of transformation.

Yonder

PROJECT: Name a eco-friendly home cleaning products brand for the North American market.

YONDER: A distant place, usually within sight. At some distance in the direction indicated; over there. In or at that indicated place: *the house over yonder*.

BRAND POSITIONING: Ecozone, a top eco-friendly home cleaning products brand in the UK, was expanding to North America and needed a new brand, both for trademark reasons and, importantly, because the name Ecozone risked disappearing in a sea of soundalike "eco" brand names in the U.S. market. We explored a number of names relating directly, indirectly, and metaphorically to the concepts of "environmental," "planet earth," and the "healthy home," and fairly early in the process it became clear that Yonder was the best name to capture the unique spirit of this brand.

Yonder implies going "beyond" the traditional home cleaning and maintenance solutions of yesterday. It asks us to expand our horizons, to rethink how we clean and what it means to have both a clean home and a clean "home planet" to share. Yonder is also an aspiration, as the idiom, "wild blue yonder," maps to the earth as the "blue planet" as well as the "blue skies" of a healthy atmosphere.

Yonder — new horizons in cleaning.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"We've selected a unique and relatable name for our US brand thanks to Zinzin. The name has generated significant interest pending its official launch, so we're quite pleased. … Their ability to create abstract yet fitting names was exceptional. This stems from their habit of getting to know their clients and working from their perspective. While other vendors select options based on their own ideas, Zinzin considered our feedback and input."
—Marketing Manager, Yonder

Canopy

PROJECT: Rename the first "Intelligent Care Platform" for oncology.

CANOPY: The cover formed by the leafy upper branches of trees in a forest. An overhanging projection or protective covering, usually of fabric, supported on poles or suspended above a bed, throne, exalted personage, or sacred object to provide shelter.

BRAND POSITIONING: This startup came to us with the temporary name Expain; they left us as Canopy. And we're so glad they did. The company and its innovative technology deserved a name befitting their mission: to provide every person undergoing cancer treatment with the best possible outcomes and experience. They recognized the need for cancer care to catch up with the often complex and continuous needs of oncology patients in this day and age.

The name we created, Canopy, evokes the protective, enveloping, natural ecosystem of a forest tree canopy, teeming with life and renewal — the perfect metaphor for how this platform sustains and nurtures patients and caregivers. The name also resonates with Canopy's key insight: "In order to help patients, you need to help the practice first." That the name begins with the first three letters of "cancer," which also form a positive word for the ability to do something — yes, we *can* beat cancer! — is an extra bonus.

Says Canopy about their proactive care platform:

> Studies show that remote monitoring of patients receiving treatment leads to improved quality of life, satisfaction and overall survival, but providers lack the tools to deliver remote and proactive care. Canopy flips that model on its head by enabling physicians to interact with their patients continuously and proactively.

Canopy: A Platform Built for Care.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"It was great to work with them. Their expertise was outstanding — we could just tell that they were seasoned professionals. They'd done this before for incredibly successful companies, so Zinzin would come to the table with great ideas. Moreover, they shaped how we thought about picking the name, which was invaluable. They taught us a lot, so we not only accomplished the mission but also learned a lot along the way."

—Chantel Hopper, Head of Customer Success, Canopy

Manticore

PROJECT: Name a new high-tech, high-performance metal detector from Minelab.

MANTICORE: An ancient mythical beast having the head of a man, the body of a lion, and the tail of a dragon or scorpion. Some medieval accounts say that its venomous spines could be shot like arrows, thus making the manticore a lethal predator. It eats its victims whole, using its triple rows of teeth, and leaves no bones behind.

BRAND POSITIONING: Minelab, the world's leading manufacturer of metal detectors, created an new, awesomely powerful high-end product. To bring it to life, they wanted a strong, evocative name; a name that could tell a story. So, in the best naming sense, Zinzin created a monster.

The name we created, Manticore, is a cool and very unique mythical creature that positions this product as *dominating* the competition with its sheer power and unique capabilities. The hybrid image – head (and thus brain) of a man, body of a lion, and tail of a scorpion – works as a metaphor of the "hybrid" of great design + computing power + a slick display.

Digging deeper, "core" implies this is an *elemental* product, an essential addition to the serious treasure hunter's toolkit. And "Manticore" also has a phonetic similarity to "mantle," which subconsciously evokes searching "deep" into the earth. And since the manticore is part of Classical mythology, it relates well to the hunting of *Classical* artifacts.

Manticore perfectly demonstrates what this metal detector is all about: "Deep Power. Lightening Speed. Deadly Accurate." It also allows for great graphic potential, which Minelab has taken advantage of:

Manticore: The perfect beast.

Everdene

PROJECT: Name a hip, playful, indoor-outdoor rooftop restaurant and bar atop the first Virgin Hotels property in San Francisco.

EVERDENE: Bathsheba Everdene is the heroine of British author Thomas Hardy's 1874 novel, Far From The Madding Crowd.

BRAND POSITIONING: Virgin Hotels hired us to name the rooftop restaurant and bar at their brand new San Francisco hotel. The rooftop boasts a beautiful indoor space that fully opens to an outdoor garden terrace, sixteen floors above San Francisco's bustling SoMa neighborhood. The brand positioning for this drinking and dining experience required that we explore concepts related to gardens; self-assured, powerful women as avatar archetypes of this experience; literary concepts; and, as a bonus, a tangential nod to the British roots of the Virgin brand would be nice to have.

The name Everdene does all that and more — it is the perfect name for this brand positioning, and thus for this rooftop lounge. Bathsheba Everdene is a wonderful archetype of a strong, independent woman, while the name Everdene has a great look and sound, and is inclusive, inspiring, evocative, exotic, and simultaneously both classic and contemporary.

Here's what Virgin Hotels says about Everdene:

> Modern, familiar, spontaneous and playful, this cozy garden of delights offers a mix of well-crafted drinks and culinary creations. Slip outside and find yourself overlooking the San Francisco cityscape with a rooftop restaurant and bar. Rendezvous inside and experience a whole new world of eclectic and savory satisfaction that runs throughout the night.

Come to Everdene and enjoy a magical night floating high above the San Francisco cityscape.

Mojo

PROJECT: Name a company and technology platform that enables information technology to blend seamlessly into our lives.

MOJO: A magic charm, talisman, or spell. A magical power.

BRAND POSITIONING: A stealth mode Augmented Reality (AR) startup with big-name founders and investors, and more than $50 million in funding, hired us to name their new company and revolutionary "invisible computing" platform.

The name we created, Mojo, is the perfect embodiment of the almost "magical" and highly-personal wearable technology products this company is developing. With this new *invisible computing* platform, to "get your Mojo working" means you are empowered, energized, and supremely confident in every task, action, or communication *interaction*; not separated from others and the world by technology, but truly connected to it at all times, *unobtrusively*. Mojo maps to the *superpowers* this new technology will enable, allowing users to reach their full potential and do amazing things! Mojo – when you have it, anything is possible.

Mojo. Envisioning a world where technology becomes invisible, a world that's eyes up and hands-free. Follow #invisiblecomputing for the latest buzz.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"Instead of providing us with hundreds of names to choose from, they kept it focused and thoughtful. The names they suggested fit with the initial survey we filled out and became more refined through each round of the naming process. They worked hard to understand our business and preferences for what we thought was important in a name. Their process was fast and produced a high-quality list of potential names."

—Steve Sinclair, SVP of Product & Vision, Mojo Vision

Ember

PROJECT: Name an advanced temperature adjustable mug and the company behind it and future temperature control products.

EMBER: A small, glowing piece of coal or wood, as in a fire.

BRAND POSITIONING: Clay Alexander came to us with an amazing product, a sleek and beautiful new kind of travel mug being designed by the famed product design agency Ammunition. The product features advanced technology and a Bluetooth-connected smartphone app to set your ideal beverage temperature and to keep it there. But equally important, the technology is hidden and the experience of using the product seamless, no different than using a "normal" travel mug. Only better. Much better.

We helped create the name Ember for this breakthrough new mug and the company that will produce it and other temperature-controlled products in the future. Ember has great connotations of warmth, heat, and of keeping the flame alive. Also portability — the ember that you keep safe to be able to start a new fire at a different time or place. Sometimes just a few degrees can make the biggest difference in how something tastes. Ember is here to make sure your drink tastes exactly the way you like it.

Alloy

PROJECT: Rename an existing personal training systems company to create a powerful brand that aspires to be *the* leader for fitness facilities worldwide.

ALLOY: A metallic substance made by mixing and fusing two or more metals, or a metal and a nonmetal, to obtain desirable qualities such as hardness, lightness, and strength. Brass, bronze, and steel are all alloys. More generally, a mixture, blend, or combination of two or more things to obtain desirable new qualities.

BRAND POSITIONING: North Point Personal Training Systems came to us with an interesting project. The company licenses personal training systems to individual gyms, studios and trainers all over the world. We were tasked with renaming this business in order to create a strong, resonant brand for a product that manages all aspects of fitness facilities and could, potentially, become the name of franchise facilities as well.

Alloy is the ideal name for this unique business. The name represents a combination of elements coming together to create something bigger, stronger, and longer-lasting, just like the Alloy system does when combined with an individual trainer's skill, passion and know-how. It's where strength and motion meet.

The name Alloy also reflects the relationship between the trainer and their clients, working together to make the clients fitter, stronger, and healthier. Alloy is transformational, a fusion of the best practices of physical fitness business and training, trainer and client, body and mind.

Alloy. Stronger together.exp.lore.com.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"They were really good. They are really subject matter experts in naming. It was a great customer experience. I was as satisfied as I could be."
—President, Alloy Personal Training Solutions

Kilter

PROJECT: Name an "ultra-searchable" car shopping platform that helps people find the exact automobile they are looking for down to the finest detail.

KILTER: In working order. Good condition; proper form; order. Proper or usual state or condition. Idiom: "in good kilter." Synonyms for kilter: condition, form, health, keeping, order, repair, shape, trim. Idiom: "Out of kilter" of "off kilter": Out of harmony or balance.

BRAND POSITIONING: The founder of this startup had a dream: he wanted to create a company built by and for people who love cars — people who believe their car is a form of personal expression. He and his team are as passionate about helping people have a fantastic car-buying experience as they are about the cars themselves. And for that, it all comes down to the search process. "Ultra-search," in fact, far beyond what any other car-buying service offers. A key *driver* of the process was to develop a name totally unlike those of all the competitors in this space, nearly every one of which has "auto" or "car" in their name or has some banal reference to cars.

This was an amazing client, one of the most engaged and enthusiastic we've ever had. And that naturally led to a "short" list of over twenty fantastic potential names at the end of the project. After much careful deliberation, our client chose Kilter as the name of this new brand. Unique, disarming, unusual, and fun to say, Kilter maps to the ability of this web platform to bring proper form and harmony to the car-finding experience. Kilter's mission is to be the most powerful new car search engine on the planet for people who are knowledgeable, informed, and passionate about cars. Kilter is a name that defies expectations, just as this service runs counter to the typical car-buying experience. As a bonus, our client loves that Kilter rhymes with "filter," since this is the new, better way to filter new cars.

Most people are familiar with the idiom "off kilter" — now we can all experience the delight of being *on Kilter*.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"'Kilter' hooks people. More importantly, it hooked me in a way I never thought I would need. It's given me the ability to keep going when it seemed totally pointless to do so, and I'm thankful to Zinzin for that. Defining our name when there was literally nothing else became a motivating force for me."
—Chris Jackson, Founder, Kilter

Relay

PROJECT: Name a new credit score monitoring and money tracking app for SoFi.

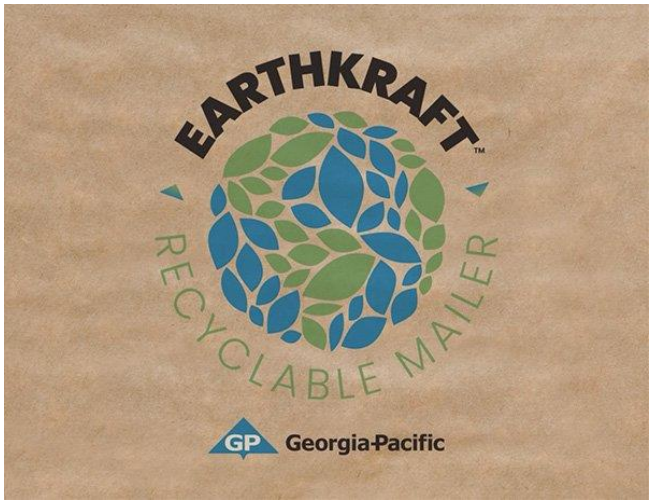
RELAY: An act of passing something along from one person, group, or station to another. Sports: A relay race. Electronics: A device that responds to a small current or voltage change by activating switches or other devices in an electric circuit. A crew of workers who relieve another crew; a shift. A fresh team, as of horses or dogs, to relieve weary animals in a hunt, task, or journey. To pass along by or as if by relay.

BRAND POSITIONING: SoFi hired Zinzin to name a new app that tracks all of your money, all in one place, and provides credit score monitoring, spending breakdowns, financial insights, and more — at no cost. The name we created, Relay, is an energetic name that connotes movement, as it transmits — *relays* — the vital data and analysis members need to better track their finances. SoFi Relay breaks down the "marathon" of personal financial growth into a series of small, discrete, and easily manageable tasks, like segments of a relay race. And like a relay race, this product is *collaborative* — with Relay, you have a valuable and trusted teammate to help you *run* your finances.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"Internal feedback's been positive—our teams were thrilled with the names they provided. Things are going well in the market, too. We had trademark issues early on, but Zinzin came up with so many names with various levels of viability that we were able to work around that. It really felt like they set us up for success from the beginning, and we've landed in a good spot."
—Director of Product Management, SoFi

EarthKraft



PROJECT: Name an eco-friendly curbside recyclable paper mailer for Georgia-Pacific.

EARTHKRAFT: An invented compound name, “Earth” + “Kraft.”

BRAND POSITIONING: When GP asked Zinzin to name a new line of mailers, we had a challenge ahead of us. The good news? This is no ordinary mailer. It’s a lightweight, cushioned mailer made in the USA entirely from sustainably sourced, curbside recyclable paper, with not a hint of plastic. The tricky bit? It exists in the ecommerce space, an industry full of brand names vying for B2B suppliers and consumers’ attention across the globe.

However, since naming is Zinzin’s specialized *craft*, we found a great solution in collaboration with our fabulous client’s team. The. Name EarthKraft maps strongly to and evokes planet Earth, the place we call home, but with an experiential twist. Kraft emphasizes the role of these recyclable kraft paper mailers in crafting more sustainable practices to help people and our planet.

But the icing on the cake is that this name also evokes the word “spacecraft” — mapping metaphorically to the notion of a *durable vessel* that *travels* great distances to deliver its contents safely to destinations near and far. Just like these mailers. EarthKraft is the eco-friendly alternative ecommerce vessel for “spaceship Earth.”

Obo

PROJECT: Name a company and software suite that guides product teams to create successful, market-first products.

OBO: Obos are stone piles used in Central Asia — Mongolia and Tibet in particular — as sacred landmarks and geographic/trail markers that guide travelers across treacherous terrain. An obo will often have messages left on it. In some areas the custom is to for each passerby to add a stone to the pile, representing themselves. Obos often form the base for the iconic colorful flags atop a long wooden pole that are synonymous with Tibet.

BRAND POSITIONING: A product management software startup on a mission to help companies transform how they define and build products came to Zinzin to help turn their vision into a brand. The company was developing powerful new tools to facilitate agile, data-driven product management, as opposed to the ad-hoc, opinion-based product management that was previously the norm.

The name we created, Obo, works on multiple levels, and evokes the company's trailblazing commitment to helping users to develop *transformative* products. Obo is emblematic of a process of illumination, enlightenment, and transformation. Each product development cycle can be visualized as an Obo formation, with each of the "stones" in the Obo representing individual members of the internal team, external customers, data clusters, or project "milestones." Obo helps users chart a path to better product outcomes. The name also functions very well as a short, rhythmic, catchy abstract name for anyone unfamiliar with the meaning.

The Obo Product Suite guides, shows the way, and marks a clear path to market-first product success.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"It's great to have two very seasoned, strong principals working on a project. A more junior staff likely would have been assigned to our account at a bigger firm. With Zinzin, we worked with the highest quality people. What you see is what you get with them, and there are no surprises afterwards."
—Former CEO, Obo

Rebus

PROJECT: Rename a life science technology company that builds tools to enable spatial omics.

REBUS: A representation of words or syllables by pictures of objects or by symbols whose names resemble the intended words or syllables in sound. In linguistics, the *rebus principle* "is the use of existing symbols, such as pictograms, purely for their sounds regardless of their meaning, to represent new words. Many ancient writing systems used the rebus principle to represent abstract words, which otherwise would be hard to represent with pictograms.

BRAND POSITIONING: Realizing the outdated and unexceptional nature of their existing name, Optical Biosystems came to us to rename both the company and their flagship integrated spatial omics platform. "Omics" refers to any of several biochemical or genetic subfields that aim to identify the totality of a certain type of biological molecule, such as *genomics* for genes or *proteomics* for proteins. According to the company, "To understand biology, you need to understand cells. And to truly understand cells you need to understand their positional context across time and space."

The name we created for the company, Rebus, maps to the idea of creating "big picture" meaning, from the anatomical to the molecular, out of images and data collected by their advanced spatial omics technology. In early civilizations, the *rebus* served as a bridge between the first pictographic writing systems and the modern, alphabetic writing systems and languages we use to this day. Thus, in the context of microbiological imaging, Rebus works as a great metaphor for deriving advanced meaning from images and their spatial context. Rebus is an unusual, distinctive, and intriguing name for a company that helps researchers to imagine, analyze, and derive meaning from the cryptic "puzzle" of biological data.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"We've had a great reaction from the stakeholders we've dealt with so far. We've received really positive feedback from our CEO and board of directors. Potential new investors thought it was a really cool name too. The name is evocative enough that people have asked about it. We put out a press release and one of the reporters I spoke with specifically asked what our name meant. I was able to explain how we chose our name because we worked with Zinzin. That question also gave us an opportunity to explain our vision for the company, which was a really great win for us."
—Erin Davis, Director of Marketing, Rebus Biosystems

X-Factor

PROJECT: Name a new premium residential subflooring product for the leading industry brand.

X-FACTOR: A noteworthy special talent or quality. A variable in a given situation that could have the most significant impact on the outcome.

BRAND POSITIONING: The AdvanTech brand of subflooring from Huber Engineered Woods is the industry leader when it comes to strength, stiffness, and moisture resistance. So when Huber invented a new premium version of its dominant subflooring panel "that is the flat out best of the best," Huber hired Zinzin to create the standout name this product deserves.

The bottom layer of the new product is the same AdvanTech® panel that contractors and homeowners know and trust. But in addition, Huber added an innovative extra weather resistant barrier as the top layer of the subfloor. Together, these two layers deliver superior benefits, such as extra water resistance and more consistent surface quality, "Sharpie friendliness," and a distinctive gold color for high visibility and superior overall jobsite aesthetics.

X-Factor is the ultimate "game-changer" name, the name that says this product has a "special something" about it that no other subflooring product has, including the "regular" AdvanTech panel, enhancing and extending the AdvanTech brand. Contractors will easily understand that, when they need that special something, they need AdvanTech X-Factor.

As Huber says on their website:

> *AdvanTech X-Factor is a new, premium subflooring that rises to meet the evolving needs of craft builders. Featuring an innovative built-in, water-shedding barrier, it delivers jobsite durability against weather and a smooth, easy-to-clean surface that's great for written jobsite communications. The unique, enduring look of AdvanTech X-Factor also creates a refined signature work site that exceeds expectations of the most discerning clients.*

Huber Advan Tech X-Factor. FLAT OUT BEST™.

Protagonist

PROJECT: Name a feature-based web and app crowdfunding tool that enables independent game studios to engage, interact, and monetize their communities in a new way.

PROTAGONIST: An advocate, leader, proponent, or champion of a particular cause, idea, or movement. The leading character in a drama, film, novel, game, or other fictional work.

BRAND POSITIONING: A Protagonist is the leading character at the center of a story, typically making the key decisions that drive the plot forward, the perfect name for this service that is the heroic champion of video game developers. Antagonists will throw down obstacles, create complications, and inflame conflicts that test the Protagonists who use this tool, thus revealing the strengths of each developer's character. In ancient Greek drama a Protagonist was the first actor to engage in dialogue with the chorus, so the name also maps metaphorically to this crowdfunding tool that enables game studios to engage with their chorus of players, fans, and patrons in an exciting new way.

Protagonist — Make games legendary.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"They are experts in their field. Their knowledge and approach are apparent on their website, but powerful when experienced first-hand. Anyone can find a name in the dictionary, but finding a brand name requires art and craft expertise, both of which Zinzin delivers…. They may only specialize in naming, but they do it well. We couldn't ask for anything more."
—CEO, Protagonist

Sugarcube

PROJECT: Rename the flagship home furnishings visualization app for a startup company in the AI/machine vision space.

SUGAR CUBE: A small cube of compacted sugar used especially for sweetening hot drinks. Cube: a symmetrical three-dimensional shape, either solid or hollow, contained by six equal squares.

BRAND POSITIONING: Geomagical Labs, an AI/machine vision startup, hired us to name their new interior design app that allows users to input photos of their own interior spaces and then see how items from the company's catalog of partner interior furnishings and wall treatments would look in the customer's home. The company wanted to move away from their original name for the product, Wallspice, which was narrowly restricted to wall treatments and furthermore disapeared in a sea of sound-alike interior design brands that all included "Wall" in their names.

The client chose a very strong pool of leading contender names. The name they selected, Sugarcube, is a warm, friendly, and approachable evocative name that sweetly evokes comfort, ease-of-use, and a modern, pop style. Sugarcube is all about sweetening every interior aspect of your "cube" – your personal living space.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"Zinzin's work impressed the internal team and built confidence for the brand and product. The team's organization, enthusiasm, and commitment to their craft was refreshing. Their services balance practical strategy with creative expertise, delivering valuable results."
—Head of Products, Geomagical Labs

Veritas Alta

PROJECT: Name a cloud data management platform by Veritas Technologies, a leader in multi-cloud data management with over 80,000 customers, including 95 percent of the Fortune 100.

ALTA: Latin for high, tall, elevated; deep, profound, deep-rooted.

BRAND POSITIONING: Veritas is a well-known industry leader in multi-cloud data management. When they called-on Zinzin for help with naming their awesome new cloud data management platform, we were ready for lift-off.

One primary challenge was to think beyond cloud and sky references, which saturate the industry. We knew this new product brings together a comprehensive portfolio of essential cloud data services in a single, powerful platform. But how do we communicate this without an obvious or overused cloud reference? And we needed to bear in mind that the name would be used in conjunction with "Veritas."

To address these brand positioning requirements, Zinzin created the name Alta. The concept of being *deep-rooted* (an established leader) and *at the top* (reaching new heights) is an interesting juxtaposition to represent leadership in cloud-based platforms. Alta encapsulates this with grace and simplicity, while pairing exceptionally well with the parent brand Veritas. It supports the concepts of superiority and next-level leadership.

Regarding the launch of Veritas Alta, Veritas CEO Greg Hughes said,

> "Our approach to multi-cloud brings more than 30 years in enterprise-class data management innovation to bear as we address the unique needs of the cloud. Veritas Alta advances our mission to empower customers to own and control their data no matter where it resides—on-prem or in the cloud—while reducing the operational complexity and costs associated with managing multi-cloud environments."

Veritas Alta. The most comprehensive and secure cloud data management platform.

Zeo

PROJECT: Name a suite of consumer banking services.

ZEO: An invented name, playing off "neo" and "Zeno," the Greek philosopher famed for his paradoxes.

BRAND POSITIONING: TCF, a national bank holding company with 342 branches in seven states, hired us to name a new suite of consumer banking services. The suite is designed to make managing your money faster and easier, and includes a prepaid debit card, check cashing, a savings account, money transfers, bill payments, and money orders. This suite of products is designed to fit into the customer's rhythm of life, as they will be able to satisfy their financial needs with just one convenient resource, when and where they need it. Definitely not the same old tired and restrictive financial services offering.

The positioning for this disruptive brand was all about freedom, convenience, control, simplicity, and ease of use, and the name itself had to be cool, hip, and techy, yet casual and approachable. That's were Zinzin came it. Our name for this financial product, ZEO, evokes a new ("neo"), empowering, and aspirational approach to personal finance. ZEO is very short and sweet, with a smooth, fun, energetic, and friendly vibe. It is also *verbable*: *ZEO it. ZEO me some cash. I just ZEO'd my bills.* Above all, ZEO is warm, approachable, and supportive, like the ideal financial advisor: *Me and my ZEO. ZEO is always with me. ZEO's got my back.*

Looking for all basic banking services in one place at a time that's convenient for your busy life? Get ZEO.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"The name makes the brand stand out among competitors, and the business is growing. Creative and experienced, Zinzin exceeded all expectations, while their clear and structured process helped them work quickly and effectively."
—Product Marketing Manager, TCF Bank

Pebble

PROJECT: Naming a kinder, safer, more fun social media platform.

PEBBLE: A small stone, especially one that has been made smooth by water.

BRAND POSITIONING: Friends and ex-Tweeps, Gabor Cselle and Sarah Oh were disappointed by and fed up with the wreckage of Twitter and so many social media platforms. They decided it was time to help turn the tide of social media back towards a hospitable place to have authentic human conversations. A place that values kindness, trust, safety, and a positive user experience above all. So Gabor and Sarah teamed-up to create a new social media platform, and hired Zinzin to name it.

Zinzin created the name Pebble as a response to our client's clear vision and brand positioning: to be *authentic* and *humble*, bringing a refreshing experience, even magic moments of delight through connection and conversation with real people. A renewed vision for social media as an oasis without the toxic stew of bots, misinformation, and hate speech.

Pebble maps to the concepts of small, humble, and part of the natural environment as the result of natural processes. Each pebble is unique and has been smoothed by the action of water, signifying the passage of time. However, when tossed in a pond, even a little pebble makes ripples that expand ever outward, a metaphor for the potential of each and every individual using this platform to create far-reaching effects on culture and society.

A pebble is also something simple and familiar the world over. Whether you toss it or hold it in your hand for luck, a pebble is never singular or alone. It's forever part of a greater collection or gathering.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"My co-founders and I were very happy with the depth of the brief Zinzin delivered for possible names. We also appreciated their help with the trademarking process. In the end, we also received very strong validation and feedback because our community really liked the name that we chose."

—Co-founder, Pebble

Anthology

PROJECT: Create a new name for Poachable, an anonymous career matchmaking company and service.

ANTHOLOGY: A published collection of poems or other pieces of writing. A published collection of songs or musical compositions issued in one album.

BRAND POSITIONING: Poachable came to us with a unique naming project when they ran into trademark issues with their name. But the company was also broadening the scope of its offerings, and their visionary CEO, Tom Leung, understood that the trademark issue was a perfect catalyst to establish a new brand that better reflected the company's vision going forward. It was no longer just about the narrow function of enabling companies to "poach" top talent from other firms. While anonymous job exploration is still a big part of what their service does, the company will be adding lots of exciting new career optimizing features and services in the future that will take their platform to a whole new level – well beyond simply being *poachable*.

The new name we developed, Anthology, is a great metaphor for this epic, iconic, and page-turning career and recruitment platform. Anthology is a collection of the unique, individual stories that each candidate and recruiter contributes to this collaborative ecosystem. The typical job listings website is like a short story; Anthology is much bigger than that, and will be there with you through every plot twist, storyline, and chapter, providing you with the big picture narrative you need to make more informed career decisions. Anthology conveys the company's long-term vision of helping everyone in the world achieve the most amazing career story possible. We also created the tagline, *Careers Reimagined*, which further reinforces both the world in which Anthology operates and the company's vision of changing the conversation in that world.

Anthology. Careers Reimagined.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"…a very prominent venture capitalist said, 'I didn't think your original name sounded like a company that I could see going public, but the new one seems like a real company that matches the big vision you have.' The transition to Anthology has been very smooth, and Zinzin's role was much more than just coming up with a name. They've played a huge role in constructing the strategy and the brand identity for Anthology."

—CEO, Anthology

Visual Objects

PROJECT: Name a new portfolio website for creative firms for a returning client, Clutch, which we previously named.

VISUAL OBJECTS: An experiential name created by combining “Visual,” able to be seen, relating to or using sight, with “Objects,” things that you can see and touch, or that you plan to achieve.

BRAND POSITIONING: Visual Objects is an iconic name for a portfolio website that showcases work from top creative firms around the world. Companies use Visual Objects as a valuable resource to find the right design partner for their creative business needs. The name also speaks to the act of visualizing future creative projects, becoming an essential step in any hiring decision.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

“We had a good history with Zinzin as we have worked with them very effectively before—our familiarity with each other meant we went through an expedited, shortened process…. They did so well that we cut the process short; it was a unique situation as we had a couple of leading options immediately. We were able to secure the dot-com URLs and then paused the project to think about it for a week or so. It was then we decided we were done and happy with the results…. They’re now the go-to naming firm for us.”

—Founder, Clutch, The Manifest, and Visual Objects

Juniper

PROJECT: Name a hip, gin-focused and garden-inspired bar in the center of the casino action at the newly rebranded Park MGM resort, Las Vegas.

JUNIPER: Any evergreen, coniferous shrub or tree of the genus *Juniperus* having cones that resemble dark-blue or blackish berries used in flavoring gin.

BRAND POSITIONING: MGM Resorts completely remodeled and redesigned their Monte Carlo hotel casino in Las Vegas, rebranding it Park MGM, and hired us to name two new bars on the property. The first of these to open is a bar with a garden inspiration — mapping back to being part of "Park" MGM — that is located in the center of the casino action. We explored a number of names related to gardens, botany, and the concept of centrality, and the name that resonated the most was Juniper. Also, over the course of the project it was decided that *gin* would be the spirit of focus at this new bar, more so than at any other venue in Las Vegas. With that strategic decision in place, Juniper, named after the plant whose berries are used in flavoring gin, became the *perfect* name for this bar.

Here's how Park MGM tells the story:

> Juniper Cocktail Lounge invites you to enjoy hand-crafted cocktails in a space that's as serious about kicking back as it is about cocktails. Home to the largest collection of gin in Las Vegas, Juniper takes its name from the juniper berries that bring us gin. .... Everything on the menu at Juniper Cocktail Lounge has a story, making it the ideal setting to explore yours.

There's a new gin joint in town — Juniper Cocktail Lounge.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"Zinzin was very professional and very intent on delivering what we were looking for. The team asked a lot of questions to try and understand what we had in mind and to ensure they were providing options that accommodated our needs. Not every provider does that. They were also efficient in all of our communications and in conference calls. They had a good, organized structure which allowed things to move along pretty quickly." *—David Tsai, SVP & CFO, Park MGM*

Kolo

PROJECT: Brand a technology platform that ensures restroom dispensers are stocked and fixtures are fully functional.

KOLO: A Serbian folk dance performed by a group arranged in a circle, with the soloists in the center.

BRAND POSITIONING: Georgia Pacific hired us to name their new technology platform that empowers building managers and custodians with advanced sensors, real-time reporting, and continuous monitoring via smartphone and tablet apps to help them make restroom paper and soap products go further, while also ensuring for patrons that restrooms are always fully stocked.

The name we created, Kolo, works great as a short, rhythmic invented name with techy associations of “co-location.” The Serbian folk dance of the same name, with dancers arranged in a circle and soloists in the center, is a great metaphor for how this platform and sensors work in a continuous “dance” of data communication. Kolo is a smart, responsive, and all-encompassing network of interconnected devices, resources, and staff, all dancing in unison.

Gravy

PROJECT: Name a mobile, location-based marketing data analytics company and its "hyperlocal" events listing app.

GRAVY: Gravy is the good stuff, the "secret sauce," a source for discovering all the juicy things going on around you, and for B2B customers the most "delicious" mobile marketing analytics.

BRAND POSITIONING: C'mon admit it, you want another ladle of Gravy. The brand positioning for this company and app, which we helped our client develop, began with "Get Engaged" – have an active lifestyle, be out and about, take part in life by discovering great events and experiences right in your own backyard. It is all about serendipitous discovery, finding your fun, getting the scoop with "insider information" about cool happenings near you. Think of it as your very own *hipster tipster*!

Finding and having fun, memorable experiences shouldn't be hard, shouldn't be a time-consuming chore, shouldn't be work; it should be natural and easy. Like Gravy. The brand embodies — and the new name *demonstrates* — a rich and *flavorful* experience; it brings out the best and makes everything taste better. Gravy shows you the way, but doesn't get in the way. And it is perfectly extensible to the mobile, location-based marketing analytics company that grew from the initial product.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"In terms of market impact, [the new name] changed everything for our company. It's the most tangible aspect of our brand, we've trademarked it, and it has become everything that we represent to the marketplace. Among other things, people ask us all the time what the name means, so it gets the response we want, which is, increased engagement with our customers."
—Founder of Gravy

Fluent

PROJECT: Rebrand one of North America's largest home security firms to consolidate two companies into one, with a new name and a broader mission: comprehensive home automation.

FLUENT: The ability to express oneself readily, clearly and effectively. Flowing or moving smoothly and gracefully. To be fluent in something — like a language or an instrument — is to be able to use it smoothly and effortlessly. If you're performing a skill, task or deed in a way that makes it look easy, you're fluent.

BRAND POSITIONING: The client came to us with a unique problem: because of trademark issues, the same home security company known as Titan Alarm in Canada was called Stryke Alarm in the United States, creating a split personality, not to mention duplicate accounting and business processes. As the company was also moving beyond just home security into a full spectrum of comprehensive, state-of-the-art home automation and security, this was the perfect time to rebrand and finally align all their businesses in North America, collectively serving over 500,000 customers, under one powerful new brand name.

The name Fluent perfectly repositions the company as the definitive experts who "speak all languages" in user-friendly home automation and security. The Fluent home automation and security system is always on: it's ready, steady, and good to go. A Fluent home is whip smart, energy efficient, safe, secure and very easy to manage. The Fluent home automation system is fluid, responsive, versatile, and elegantly designed. It is the embodiment of grace under pressure, performing seamlessly, effortlessly, day in and day out. Fluent is the premiere technology and service resource for all your security, home and automation needs.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"Overall, we're very pleased with the name Zinzin helped us come up with. The feedback from both customers and internal teams has been great…. They genuinely value the story behind the name of a brand."

—Marketing Director, Fluent Home

The Manifest

PROJECT: Name a new small business news, data, and how-to guides website for a returning client, Clutch, which we previously named.

MANIFEST: To prove; put beyond doubt or question. Clearly revealed to the mind or the senses or judgment. Display or show (a quality or feeling) by one's acts or appearance; demonstrate. A customs document listing the contents put on a ship or plane.

BRAND POSITIONING: Our friends at Clutch tasked us with naming a new website to provide news, data, and how-to guides for small businesses, extending the range of services they offer businesses on the Clutch website. We created the name The Manifest, which has a great double meaning: as a verb it connotes the *revealing* of knowledge by making it *manifest* — and as a noun it represents the definitive "list" of all that you need to know to achieve greater success in business. As it says on The Manifest website:

Our mission is to gather and verify the hard data, expert insights, and actionable advice that you need to build your brand and grow your business – to provide the practical business wisdom that manifests in your success.

Join the community over at The Manifest and discover the answers to your most pressing business questions and advance your business savvy.

The Manifest — *Compiling Practical Business Wisdom to Make Your Goals a Reality*

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"We had a good history with Zinzin as we have worked with them very effectively before—our familiarity with each other meant we went through an expedited, shortened process…. They did so well that we cut the process short; it was a unique situation as we had a couple of leading options immediately. We were able to secure the dot-com URLs and then paused the project to think about it for a week or so. It was then we decided we were done and happy with the results…. They're now the go-to naming firm for us."

—Founder, Clutch, The Manifest, and Visual Objects

Bebop

PROJECT: Name a red grape with good size and color, a mild Labrusca flavor profile, and high yield potential.

BEBOP: An early form of modern jazz.

BRAND POSITIONING: International Fruit Genetics (IFG), the renowned and innovative fruit breeder that changed the way consumers and retailers think of grapes, found naming enlightenment when they broke out of their usual grape naming convention and created a phenomenally successful grape with the name Cotton Candy. That led IFG to rethink their grape branding strategy, which in turn led them to hire Zinzin to name a number of new grapes they were planning to bring to market in 2020.

Bebop is an onomatopoeic name that is full of energy and action — an affirmation: Be! A movement: Bop! To be in rhythm, to be in sync, to move with confidence and virtuosity. A lively, fun, and engaging name that is all about joy, spontaneity, and passion.

IFG CEO Andy Higgins on the launch of the new Zinzin-named grapes:

> "Our new names are catchy, fun and memorable," Higgins said. "They reflect our efforts to revolutionize the industry. We aim to inspire the consumer and give our growers, marketers, and retailers a platform to maximize the potential that each variety has to offer."

A bunch of grapes: We have created a total of seven grape varietal names for IFG: Bebop, Gracenote, Julep, Kokomo, Quip, Rugby, and Torch.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"Zinzin really cared about our success, so they were very hands-on. Their enthusiasm showed when they would send us pictures of our products on store shelves. They even took on several unexpected tasks at no additional cost to us because they wanted to make sure we were satisfied with the project's result. They went the extra mile to make sure we were happy with the final product."
—Andy Higgins, CEO, International Fruit Genetics (IFG)

Rubicon

PROJECT: Create a name for a new float studio brand based in Kirkland, Washington.

RUBICON: A bounding or limiting line; especially, one that when crossed commits a person irrevocably. A river in Italy that, in the era of the Roman republic, was crossed by Julius Caesar and his army in violation of Roman law. Notes Wikipedia: "The phrase 'crossing the Rubicon' has survived to refer to any individual or group committing itself irrevocably to a risky or revolutionary course of action, similar to the modern phrase 'passing the point of no return.'"

BRAND POSITIONING: What is floating? It has been known variously as floating, flotation, or sensory deprivation, and is best described by the company we named Rubicon:

> Floating is the practice of lying on a bed of warm salt water, in a space that blocks out light and sound, helping you achieve the ultimate state of relaxation so your body and mind can rest, repair, and refresh. … By simulating a zero-gravity environment, floating gives your entire body the chance to repair. By removing external light and noise, floating gives your mind a chance to refresh and focus.

This is a float studio like no other, going to great lengths in acoustical engineering to thoroughly isolate and soundproof the flotation tanks and rooms; to perfectly control the tank temperature and humidity; to the installation of eco-friendly showers; and to the overall aesthetic experience. The name Rubicon evokes commitment, resolve, determination, and change. Crossing this Rubicon is all about relaxation, meditation, and rejuvenation. Once people discover the transformational power of Rubicon, there's no going back to the old way of being. And the name has an edge, swagger, and attitude far beyond the "zenny" platitudes of most float, meditation, and yoga studios, setting this company apart from the pack. Rubicon is transforming the flotation experience.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"In terms of the reception of my new name from the previous name, my brand is much stronger. It's a stronger brand than any others in the float world. We've raised the bar in terms of our brand experience and it's helped a lot with our brand positioning. When I'm dealing with other industries, the name recognition has been very good for me."

—Founder, Rubicon Float Studio

Éclair

PROJECT: Name a natural body care brand to reflect a fresh, sophisticated, and *tasty* "luxury for everyone" brand positioning.

ECLAIR: An oblong cream puff. Origin: from French *éclair* "flash of lightning," so named because it is eaten quickly (in a flash).

BRAND POSITIONING: We were hired to name a new natural body care brand with a straightforward, powerful mission: "We believe that everybody deserves to have access to luxurious body care products that are also natural, efficacious and affordable." All of the company's products are non-GMO verified, gluten free, soy free, cruelty free and vegan, and are made in their own facility in the USA.

The name we created, Éclair, is perfect for this skincare and personal body care brand. Éclair is a fun yet very elegant name that works on multiple levels. As a delicious cream puff, the name maps perfectly to the concept that these natural personal body care products are so safe for your body that you could eat them. Phonetically, Éclair evokes *clarity*, and thus purity, illumination, and enlightenment. And the accented French spelling reinforces the *luxuriousness* of the brand.

The name Éclair accomplishes this brand positioning magic while remaining grounded in a word that is common enough for everyone to know in its humble pastry form. The oscillation between quotidian and sophisticated, creamy and illuminated generates creative friction that gives this brand great power and resonance.

Éclair Naturals. You. Naturally.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"Overall, Zinzin was very easy to work with and collaborative, which I've found is not common in this space. … We were very pleased with the process and the result. We're very happy with the name. I feel like I developed a friendship with Jay and the rest of his team. We definitely stay in touch, and we're inviting them to our launch party."
—CEO, Éclair Naturals

Zense

PROJECT: Name a universal credit application company and blockchain platform that provides users with a secure way to upload all the information required to complete any loan application they will ever need to submit.

ZENSE: An invented name playing off “Zen,” “sense,” and “cents.”

BRAND POSITIONING: A startup named TrueBLOK hired Zinzin because they knew they needed a better name before launching their revolutionary, blockchain-based universal credit application platform. The company wanted the name to be short, catchy, and elemental, with no strong existing associations, so that it could more easily become synonymous with “the new way to apply for any kind of loan.” We delivered with Zense, a short, energetic invented name with a great look, feel, and sound.

Here’s what the company says about their innovative service:

Zense is a blockchain platform for getting your next loan. Credit applications don’t have to be such a pain – from researching different lenders, comparing rates, and filling out form after form after form, finding and applying for the credit you need can be a tedious and draining process.

With Zense, your next application is your last. Once you’ve signed up, getting credit couldn’t be easier.

That’s right: one last loan application to rule them all! And Zense is built on the IBM Hyperledger blockchain network, which means that user data is backed by the highest level of security.

Zense maps strongly to the idea that this will greatly simplify everyone’s financial lives, an idea that’s just plain common sense. Embrace the Zen of only filling out one more loan application in your life, with Zense.

Zense. Your last credit application. Ever.

Noovie

PROJECT: Rename an existing and well-known "pre-show" of packaged entertainment content that is screened in many movie theaters to create an entertainment brand that extends the movie experience "beyond the theater."

NOOVIE: An invented play on "new" and "movie."

BRAND POSITIONING: NCM, America's largest cinema advertising network, hired Zinzin to rename its flagship product, the *First Look* "preshow" that was screened in AMC, Cinemark, and many other theaters nationwide. NCM provides national, regional and local brands access to over 750 million moviegoers through this platform, and the company wanted to rebrand it to not only give it a new look and feel, but to make the product more cohesive and develop an ownable brand. As NCM noted in the launch announcement:

We're trying to organically create a thematic arch from start to finish, so it feels more like a show. Not only will the look and feel be more contemporary and more geared toward our core audience of Gen Z and Millennial movie fans, but we're also creating our own original content and partnering with a variety of producers.

This original content is now being packaged in an "integrated digital and mobile ecosystem delivering content, commerce and gaming, engaging consumers throughout their movie-going journey," and beyond. The name we came up with, *Noovie*, is perfect for this new entertainment brand that revolves around the experience of seeing a movie in a theater, while extending that experience beyond the theater into movie discovery, mobile apps, gaming, and other content.

Noovie takes film fans behind the scenes and beyond the theater.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"We appreciated the custom approach [Zinzin] took; it wasn't templated at all. Some of the organizations we were interviewing seemed to provide us with a templated approach. Zinzin treated us like an individual and was flexible in their approach."

—Creative Director, National CineMedia (NCM)

vybe

PROJECT: Re-name a local chain of urgent care centers to better reflect the brand positioning and allow the chain to expand to other regions.

BRAND POSITIONING: Our client came to us with a local Philadelphia chain of urgent care centers that represented a new concept for providing healthcare that is accessible, convenient, reliable, frictionless, easy, warm, inviting, hassle-free, responsive, innovative, progressive, and enlightened. Unfortunately, their original name, "Philadelphia Urgent Care," was a generic descriptive name with zero brand value that also restricted the company's aspiration to eventually expand to other cities.

We developed a number of interesting names for this concept, but it became clear over the course of this project that vybe is the clear winner, perfectly capturing the brand ethos with a warm, inviting, hip, jaunty, and contemporary name that strongly positions this brand to expand to other markets.

vybe is defining the new way to be seen when you need immediate, convenient medical treatment.

Cassava

PROJECT: Name the premier substance abuse recovery app that helps users maintain their sobriety.

CASSAVA: A staple food in the tropics. Any of several plants of the genus *Manihot* having fleshy roots yielding a nutritious starch and the source of tapioca.

BRAND POSITIONING: Elements Behavioral Health, a national network of substance abuse and mental health treatment centers and programs, hired us to name the next generation of their iPromises recovery app. The new iPhone / iPad app is offered free of charge on the new Addiction.com portal for addiction, recovery and mental health that Elements created. The app is designed to provide users with a variety of simple tools they can use every day, such as easily locate nearby meetings, monitor moods and activities, and track daily progress, to help them build a strong foundation in — and stay on track with — their recovery.

During our brand development workshop with the client, we identified three key brand positions that formed the conceptual framework for the name development phase. Throughout the review process a cluster of names emerged that evoked recovery, sustainability and nurturing, but Cassava quickly rose to the top as the perfect metaphor for this innovative recovery app. Cassava is a nutritious staple food of the tropics, and the name evokes fresh ocean breezes, rejuvenation, health and wellbeing. Cassava is a sweet and very *sticky* (memorable) name that is as fun to say as it is easy to use.

This app keeps users connected to the *nurturing roots* of recovery one day at a time. Cassava is a spirited, lively and action-oriented name that has the potential of becoming part of the parlance of recovery: *Let's Cassava a meeting together.*

The Cassava App: Get grounded in recovery.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"We're on our eighth [ten now completed] project with them. It's a very good process. It's very effective. It's fun and very collaborative. What stands out to me is the consistency in their work, their professionalism and how they deliver their work."

—Chief Internet and Media Officer, Elements Behavioral Health

Pivot

PROJECT: Name a new entertainment and social action television network that will air feature documentaries, reality TV, drama series, variety shows and an open source talk show.

PIVOT: Beyond just turning and rotating, pivot is the one central thing that something — maybe everything — depends upon. It can be a structured course correction or a re-alignment of priorities. Pivot is all about thinking on your feet, adaptation and informed change. Also connotes *pivotal*, as in being of critical, essential importance.

BRAND POSITIONING: The Pivot brand is empathetic, and connotes the dance of collaborators — auteurs and audience — learning to work together, to understand and inspire each other. The Pivot network doesn't strong-arm or browbeat you, it uses compelling, entertaining stories to get the audience to gently pivot in their thinking, and to inspire them to action.

Explaining the thinking behind the new network's name and brand position, Pivot president Evan Shapiro says that "the world is on a path right now, but there are many different paths that we can choose. We're not necessarily saying which one's the right one, but we know where we're headed right now is not working. So it's time to shift, and it's time to pivot."

The world is changing, and Pivot will be right there in the middle of that change. And with its innovative digital distribution strategy, Pivot may just turn the television industry upside down as well. The name Pivot is perfect for this ambitious network that is both *television* and *post-television*. The old ways of thinking, acting and relating to each other and the world are not working anymore. It's time to Pivot.

Pivot. It's your turn.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"Their [Zinzin's] team was excellent. Everything was on time. They also did a good job of explaining upfront how long each phase was going to take. The process went really smoothly. I'd never done a naming exercise before, so they gave me a lot of good advice throughout."

—Former EVP Marketing, Participant Media / Pivot

Lore

PROJECT: Re-name the online education service company Coursekit to create a broader, higher-level, evocative brand that will become synonymous with *learning*.

LORE: Lore is knowledge acquired through education or experience, shared between people and passed down across generations. Literally the body of knowledge, especially of a traditional, anecdotal, or popular nature, on a particular subject; *folklore*. Learning, knowledge, or erudition that transcends book learning.

BRAND POSITIONING: Coursekit began life in the fall of 2011 as an online course management service for college students and professors. Offering an experience far superior to all existing course management products, Coursekit was a big hit, and its growth and word-of-mouth buzz has been tremendous. But the company's mission is greater than just the nuts and bolts of course management; it is about the bigger idea of sharing and transmitting knowledge itself between people. The name Coursekit was too narrow, linear, and failed to rise above the goods and services being offered, which is a hallmark of powerful brands that command strong audience engagement

Joseph Cohen, the co-founder and CEO of Coursekit, hired Zinzin to create the perfect name for his Big Idea, and we delivered with Lore, a *transformational* name for a transformational company. Here's how Lore announced their new name to the world: "Coursekit started as a toolkit for courses. Courses became communities of learners. We've seen that people learn by sharing. Our mission is to connect the world's learners and educators. We need a name that reflects our ambitions. Lore means knowledge shared between people. That's what we are about."

Simple, direct, and to the point. The company also created an advanced blog to function as "a discovery engine for meaningful knowledge, fueled by cross-disciplinary curiosity," which is all about exploring knowledge. The added bonus of the name Lore, after having secured the exact-match .com domain name, is that this discovery engine, edited by Maria Popova of Brain Pickings fame, is called Explore, and can be found at the subdomain exp.lore.com.

Elements

PROJECT: Create a name for Georgia-Pacific's sustainability platform service brand

ELEMENT: A component or constituent of a whole or one of the parts into which a whole may be resolved by analysis. Chemistry: one of a class of substances that cannot be separated into simpler substances by chemical means. A natural habitat, sphere of activity, environment, etc. One of the substances, usually earth, water, air, and fire, formerly regarded as constituting the material universe.

BRAND POSITIONING: Georgia-Pacific hired us to create a name for their GP PRO Sustainability Platform, which serves as a launching pad to help customers identify GP PRO's top choice, sustainable solutions. The platform also provides relevant knowledge and insights, plus consultation around the sustainable attributes and certifications of GP PRO's solutions. It's how GP PRO helps make sustainability easy to understand and implement.

The name we created, Elements, is perfect for reinforcing that sustainability is now a core — *elemental* — part of everything GP PRO does, as well as, more and more, their customers. From the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire, to the elements of the Periodic Table, GP PRO Elements is a brand platform that is elemental in the race to save the planet.

Redshift

PROJECT: Name a new MBA-level online training product for business from eCornell drawing from a library of on-demand content from Cornell University.

REDSHIFT: In astronomy, a shift in the spectra of very distant galaxies toward longer wavelengths (to the red end of the spectrum); generally interpreted as evidence that the universe is expanding.

BRAND POSITIONING: *Evidence that the universe is expanding*, Redshift is the perfect metaphor for a system that enables and empowers the next-generation of business leaders to create expansive, sustained growth for their companies. The color red is an essential element of the Cornell University and eCornell brand identity; in fact, "Big Red" is the informal name of the sports teams, and other competitive teams, at Cornell University. So the client very much liked the dynamic reference to Cornell University, in the sense of "shifting" away from the ivory tower of academia ("Big Red") to the "real world" of corporate learning, while still retaining its roots and academic *bona fides*. Expanding the *universe* of education beyond the *university*. "Shift" also suggests a new paradigm in online learning, as well as shifting the balance sheet "out of the red and into the black," implying that this is good for a company's bottom line. Authoritative, proven, credible and dynamic, a forward-thinking name for a progressive leader in online education.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"They met all the deadlines. They were great at discussion. They were creative and had a lot of great ideas."
—Former CEO, eCornell

3D XPoint

PROJECT: Name a breakthrough non-volatile storage memory technology.

3D XPOINT: Pronounced “3D cross point,” referring to the structure of the memory cells.

BRAND POSITIONING: We helped our client Intel create the name 3D XPoint for this breakthrough new storage memory technology. Intel 3D XPoint storage memory technology delivers faster performance and greater power efficiency at lower cost across a range of products from SSDs, to servers, 2 in 1 PCs and tablets. This ingredient brand technology makes other storage chips better by unlocking enormous memory capabilities and speed at low cost. Data is *persistent* (non-volatile), meaning that when you shut off the power, the data isn’t lost, as with RAM/Flash memory.

The name for this technology had to send the signal that the products incorporating it are a generational, revolutionary advancement of Intel innovation, while driving brand-building equity more to the “Intel” masterbrand than to the technology itself. 3D XPoint perfectly serves this purpose.

Lucida

PROJECT: Create a name for a new, upscale, state-of-the-art residential mental health and substance abuse treatment center in South Florida that appeals equally to both English and Spanish-speakers.

LUCIDA: A play off *lucid*: having a clear mind, characterized by clear perception or understanding; rational or sane. Lucid comes from the Latin *lūcidus*: clear, bright, shining, full of light, and thus, figuratively: clear, perspicuous, and lucid. But Lucida is also an English word in its own right, meaning "the brightest star in a constellation," closely related to another meaning of lucid: shining and bright, able to be seen with clarity. Lucida is easily understood in Spanish, for which *lúcido* is the direct translation of lucid.

BRAND POSITIONING: The goal of any mental health or substance treatment program is *lucidity*: having a clear mind, characterized by keen perception or understanding of one's self, and being rational or sane, often quite the opposite from how people are when they first enter into month-long residential treatment programs. The multiple meanings and associations of the name Lucida, evoking the clarity and rationality of *lucid thought*, as well as the transformational aspiration of burnishing your mind and spirit to become "the brightest star in a constellation," make is a perfect fit for this treatment facility, whose brand position and tagline is "Discover Your Light." Lucida will illuminate your path to lasting recovery, and, the light, spirit and elegance of Lucida clearly transcends culture and language.

Lucida: Discover Your Light.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"We're on our eighth [ten now completed] project with them. It's a very good process. It's very effective. It's fun and very collaborative. What stands out to me is the consistency in their work, their professionalism and how they deliver their work."

—Chief Internet and Media Officer, Elements Behavioral Health

Nuage Rouge

PROJECT: Rebrand a Montreal-based artisanal gourmet food service for cafes, bars, and microbreweries. French is the dominant language in Quebec, and by law all commercial signage in Montreal must appear in French. So the new name had to work first in French, but also translate well into English.

NUAGE ROUGE: The English translation is "Red Cloud." A *nuage rouge / red cloud sunset* occurs when unique atmospheric conditions turn the sun and the surrounding sky an intense red. Red Cloud is also the name of a powerful Native American warrior and chief of the Oglala Lakota from 1868 to 1909.

BRAND POSITIONING: We worked closely with the client to create a powerful and memorable brand and insure that the name worked equally well in both English and French. There are myriad poetic images evoked by Nuage Rouge. For instance, "Nuage/Cloud" connotes limitless possibilities, light, air, freshness, bliss, euphoria, energy, the spirit world, mobility, freedom, liberty, abandon, independence and boundless imagination. "Rouge/Red" evokes feelings of hot, spicy, peppery, sexy, passionate, bold, daring, audacious, dangerous, extreme, and revolutionary.

Nuage Rouge is the perfect metaphor for an eclectic fusion of French, Cajun, Belgian, Spanish and South American cuisine. The vision for the kitchen was inspired by the ethos and food preparation techniques of a community of Trappist monks which settled in Quebec in the early 20th century. The Trappists deeply believe in the power of work and the creation of goods. The 48th chapter of the Rule of St. Benedict states, "for then are they monks in truth, if they live by the work of their hands." Nuage Rouge shares this deep commitment to the land, food, and the spiritual powers of honest craft.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"The team was perfect. I am amazed by their expertise and the quality that they delivered. They're like the wizards of naming, truly capturing our company's look and feel within a few words."

—President, Nuage Rouge

Swirled

PROJECT: Name a new web and email-based "lifestyle curation" division and media platform.

SWIRL: To move around or along with a whirling motion; whirl; eddy. To be dizzy or giddy, as the head. To cause to whirl; twist.

BRAND POSITIONING: ArcaMax, a top publisher of news and entertainment via email newsletters, hired us to name their new "lifestyle curation" division, which launched with stories about the best restaurants, bars, and happenings in New York City, but will eventually expand to other global cities. The primary brand positioning concepts we focused on were *Curation*, emphasizing the user's process of receiving the best lifestyle and culture recommendations; and *Discovery*, enabling all people, but especially Millennials, to quickly enrich their lives by discovering food, dining, and events, which enhance their life experiences.

Our name for this new division, Swirled, perfectly combines the Curation and Discovery brand positions, "swirling together" the best and most exciting things to eat, drink, in any city, into a rich "swirl" of lifestyle options and life hacks. Here's how the company describes it on their website:

> Swirled: A newsletter, a website, a lifestyle
>
> Every day we put you at the top of your "to-do" list by swirling together original stories with the best lifestyle content on the web. Hang with us, and you'll find awesome budgeting hacks, food-spiration, travel deals and fitness must-knows in one place. Our fresh perspective will inspire you to eat your heart out, live healthier, explore the world and thrive. Own your life and love it.

Tizzy

PROJECT: Create a brand name for a new "yogurt café" restaurant chain.

TIZZY: A state of nervous excitement.

BRAND POSITIONING: Several soon-to-be-ex-Golden Spoon Frozen Yogurt franchise owners who were passionate about expanding the "single category" frozen yogurt menu to multiple complementary products that meet the needs of active and healthy-lifestyle customers hired Zinzin to put a name to their vision. Tizzy captures the feeling of great excitement and elation when you enter one of the shops and discover that this is not your typical frozen yogurt experience. This brand is all about energy, vitality and joy. Tizzy offers a healthy and nutritional menu and has something for everyone: parents, kids, seniors, college students — even elite athletes. The stores have a warm and comfortable environment, with free wi-fi, where customers can meet friends and family, hang out, conduct business meetings, and get a pre- or post-workout energy boost.

There are also many ways that the brand and its customers can play with the language around this name: *Get into a Tizzy. I'm in a Tizzy. Meet me at Tizzy's. I'm in a Tizzy for great frozen yogurt.* A short, sweet, powerful and memorable name.

Braven

PROJECT: Name a new addiction treatment program for young adults who are at high risk of relapse. The program provides a personalized 12-step approach, individual therapy sessions, gender-specific group therapy, recreational therapy, life-skills training and access to state-of-the-art psychiatric medical services.

BRAVEN: A rare English word meaning to make brave, embolden. Or, to paraphrase the Urban Dictionary definition: A strong, courageous, warrior; a leader of many in fairness and truth; a man or woman with a purpose.

BRAND POSITIONING: Elements Behavioral Health, a repeat client of ours, came to us to rebrand what had been called "The Impact Program" for high-risk young adults at The Recovery Place, an Elements treatment center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Traditional alcohol and drug rehab programs tend to treat everyone the same way. This approach isn't very effective, especially with relapse-prone young adults who have unique issues and triggers.

Elements was interested in a name that *demonstrated* rather than *described* their unique approach to recovery. We responded by developing the distinctive and empowering name Braven, saluting the boldness and bravery required of these young adults to overcome powerful negative forces in their lives, with a nod to contemporary usage that elevates their struggle to the heroic and emphasizes positive traits of integrity, strength and honesty. Recovery is a program of action, and Braven is a very actionable and "verbable" name. The Recovery Place *Bravens* its young clients, empowering them with the courage, strength and hope to thrive in the adult world.

Braven: Fearless in the face of addiction.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"We're on our eighth [ten now completed] project with them. It's a very good process. It's very effective. It's fun and very collaborative. What stands out to me is the consistency in their work, their professionalism and how they deliver their work."

—Chief Internet and Media Officer, Elements Behavioral Health

Criterion

PROJECT: Rename an established HCM (Human Capital Management) software company to create a brand that better represents the values and aspirations of this reenergized HR, benefits and payroll software firm.

CRITERION: The ideal in terms of which something can be judged; a basis for comparison; a reference point against which other things can be evaluated.

BRAND POSITIONING: PerfectSoftware came to us as a thirty year old software firm with a new management team, game-changing product enhancements, and fresh capital investment that positioned the company for explosive growth. The management team saw this as the perfect opportunity to rebrand and asked us to create a name that better exemplified the company's bold new vision and ethos.

We created the name Criterion, which is the perfect brand name for both the company that is setting the new standard in HR software performance and the software platform that delivers on every important *criteria* of Human Capital Management (HCM). Criterion provides HR professionals with a comprehensive, integrated and flexible human resource and payroll solution for managing their company's most valuable asset — human capital. Which is another way of saying People Power.

The name also maps to the unique approach the company takes in product development, which is to design and implement each system based on their client's individual *criteria* of system features and functionality. In essence, each system is a not only setting a new standard of excellence in software engineering, but also the *criterion* by which they are developed. In addition, Criterion's HCM suite allows businesses and organizations to manage a broad range of critical human resource functions more effectively and efficiently, within a single system.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"I highly recommend them to any company that has doubts about their current brand name. Zinzin is great at evaluating a name and seeing if it aligns with someone's brand positioning. It's a good investment because you're going to be investing thousands of dollars in marketing afterward. Get the name wrong, and you're devaluing your investment. The right name can do a lot."
—Sunil Reddy, CEO, Criterion

Larky

PROJECT: Name a startup company and mobile app that keeps track of all your perks and reward program memberships in one place. The name had to be free of any app competition in the iOS and Android app stores and have an exact-match .com domain name available for purchase at a sub-exorbitant rate.

LARKY: Larky is a quirky play off "lark," a carefree or spirited adventure, harmless prank, or family of birds who communicate with sustained, melodious songs. The "-ark" of Larky is very similar to the "-erk" of perk, so Larky naturally alludes to "perk," but in an associative, non-literal way.

BRAND POSITIONING: Larky is fun, playful, joyous, melodiously singsong, and also conjures up a "lucky" feeling. In other words, it is the perfect name for an app that is ever-vigilant about alerting you to special deals sure to surprise and delight you with all the perks and discounts you deserve from your memberships. If you belong to AAA, AARP, USAA, an alumni association, professional association, museum, or any one of thousands of member organizations covered by Larky, you're entitled to valuable discounts on stuff you buy every day. It's fun, free, and really easy — no membership numbers, no account passwords, no cost, no pain.

Get Larky and get what you deserve.

What our client said (on Clutch) about working with Zinzin:

"I was reluctant to use a professional naming service at all, but my business partner pushed it on me. It turned out to be money well spent in terms of making our business easily identifiable and memorable, especially when we're at trade shows. They'd also warned us not to choose a name that was too narrow in scope so that we wouldn't have to rebrand if the company changed directions. That's what ended up happening, so it was good that we took their advice."
—Founder & CEO, Larky

Colophon

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