

## HOW TO NAME YOUR BRAND

So you need a new brand name? Well you've come to the right place.

But before we start talking about brand names, do you actually need a new brand at all?

You'd be amazed at how many new brands are created when there's a perfectly good brand already there.

What a new brand will **not** do for you:

- Compensate for a quality issue in your product or service
- Suddenly make you or your business famous
- Magically create a new positioning for your brand

Here are a few more legitimate reasons to develop a new brand:

- You have a new product or service to take to market
- You need to create a sub-brand under an existing "umbrella" brand
- Your current brand has taken a reputation bullet (a crisis badly handled, for example)
- Your current brand is not sufficiently distinctive (it's so boring that no-one remembers it)
- Your current brand has some kind of baggage that makes it a handbrake for your efforts to take it to the next level

Even if you do decide you need a new brand, are you 100% sure there isn't a role for 2 brands, targeted and positioned differently?

OK, let's assume you've decided it's time to rebrand.

The starting point for your branding is your customer.

Whatever *you* think of your own brand, the only person that matters is your customer. If your brand makes it easier for them to remember and trust your business, it's done a great job.

Therefore, a good place to start is by asking yourself who your customer is, and what problem your business solves for them.

If you can answer this, you're actually doing better than most people ever do.

One other tip is to try to use a real live person when you describe your "ideal" customer. Otherwise you will be creating something fictional, which may be good, but not nearly as relevant as describing a real person with real problems.

Once you've decided on your ideal customer, you'll need to decide on a POSITIONING for your brand. This is just another way of saying, "choose a personality for your brand". You'll want it to be something relevant to the category you work in *and* your customer.

(If you want some help with this, you can use our [Turning Leaf Positioning Wheel](#) - available free on this website).

Remember, although the brand personality should reflect the category, it doesn't have to be predictable. A humorous positioning might not be appropriate for a funeral business, and a reckless and wild positioning might not be appropriate for an airline. But then again...

Scientists have discovered that being distinctive is more important than being different when it comes to brands that grow. That means it is important to choose a brand name that stands out.

But how do you do that, exactly?

## Brainstorming:

Once you have decided on a positioning, the best way to come up with a brand name is to get a group of colleagues or friends together for a brainstorming session.

### What you will need:

- A picture of your customer
- A description of what your product or service does for them
- A wall
- A sheet of butchers' paper
- Post it notes
- Thick black pens

### What you do:

1. Explain the positioning of your brand, and what your product or service does for your target customer
2. Ask everyone to write down any ideas they already have in mind. Write one brand name on each post it note, in big writing
3. Begin to brainstorm. Ask people to brainstorm names using a variety of techniques (such as random-word association and free association - you can find many ideas online). Continue to jot down each new name on a Post-It note and stick them up on the wall.

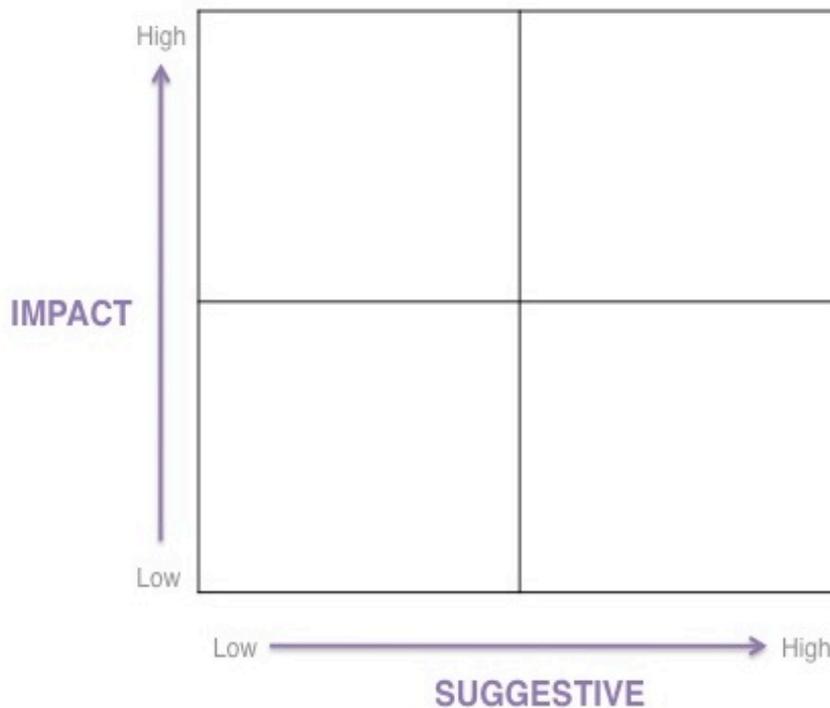
The emphasis of the brainstorming should be *quantity* NOT *quality*. In naming, **quality comes from filtering your names**, not trying to come up with the right answer.

4. Once everyone is “empty” of ideas, discuss the names presented – recording any new thoughts that arise.

Eventually, it will be time for filtering and making a shortlist.

## Making A Shortlist

One way to do this is to create a planning grid on a large piece of butchers' paper stuck to your wall:



Now place each post-it note into one of these boxes.

High IMPACT names are ones you think look memorable and distinctive. Highly SUGGESTIVE names are ones that are relevant to your customer and give a hint at the emotional benefit your brand offers your customer.

The grid allows you to identify the **High-Impact, Highly-Suggestive** names – and there you have it... your shortlist!

Consider these criteria to help you narrow your choice further:

1. Distinctiveness
2. Impact
3. Will it be confusing? (similar to competitors or conflicting brands)
4. Is it sound? (Easy to understand)
5. The way it looks when written (elegant, not too long)

6. Its ability to be trademark protected (not already taken by someone else)
7. Does it translate well?
8. Can it travel? (Does it work in all your markets?)

## Trademarks

It is worth mentioning the importance of trademarks. A lot of business owners go to the trouble of creating a great brand name - and then fail to register it as a trademark.

**This is a big mistake because it is not difficult or time consuming to use trademark legislation to protect your brand.**

If you don't do it, you will regret it when your business is a success. When someone copies your brand and you haven't got a trademark protection in advance, you are heading for an expensive court case to win back the rights to your own brand.

## Logos

Logos are often an important part of your brand.

**Here are some tips on how to develop a great logo:**

1. Do your naming first
2. Find a good agency. Do not use a crowd-sourcing site
3. Look for a logo that is clear and easy to read
4. Make sure any visuals are consistent with your **name** and **positioning**
5. Be careful with any logo that is oriented in portrait - the eye reads horizontally

Above all, don't wait around looking for the perfect logo.