

HOW TO WRITE A NAMING BRIEF — A GUIDE

1—MOTIVE—WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE?

Describe the company or organization and its need for the current naming process. Specify whether what is needed is a company name, a website name, a brand name, a sub-brand name, a naming scheme for a family of products or a title for an event, book or movie. Clarify whether the project will be one in naming, renaming or modifying a name.

2—TARGET—WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

The persons or organizations the name is to attract, interest or persuade. Potential clients, endorsers and partners—as well as anyone who might be in the position to recommend the brand to members of these groups. Where are these people? What brands do they like? What languages do they speak? What kind of humor do they like? Who has their respect?

3—MESSAGE—WHAT VALUES AND MEANINGS INSPIRE THE NAME?

Begin with the strategic concept for the brand, if one exists. List the brand's features and competitive advantages. List the values at the heart of the brand. List the personality traits that define the brand character. Watch for any pairings that seem contradictory—they may house inspiring tensions. Remember that the best names convey a few key features without negating other facets of the brand—and serve as that great opening for your pitch when you need one.

4—LANGUAGE—WHAT LINGUISTIC CRITERIA MUST THE NAME SATISFY?

Is there a preference for real words or invented ones? Are there length requirements? Are any sounds, letters or words either mandatory or not allowed? Which languages are preferred? Uppercase or lowercase? Any legibility considerations? What about diacritics?

5—AVAILABILITY—ARE PRELIMINARY SCREENINGS NECESSARY?

Web domain—with which possible extensions, assuming what kind of flexibility in domain naming? Web search verification—to uncover what is at the top of relevant searches. Language—in what languages is the name either potentially viable or inoffensive? Patent office database—for which product or service category, in which territories, using what application?

6—CONTEXT—WHAT NAMES ALREADY EXIST?

The world of names among which the new name is to belong. Relevant names can include not just the competition and sister brands in a client's portfolio, but also the names that might appear alongside the new name in various everyday settings, as well as ones that simply feel pertinent to the business or the target audience.

7—HISTORY—WHAT NAMES HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED?

Any former or rejected names contribute valuable information and help direct subsequent stages of the naming process, particularly when reasons for dismissal are included.