How to Name a Product – 10 Tips for Product Naming Success

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Product Name Must-haves

Brand synergy: Ensure your product name aligns with your brand identity and overall strategy.

Resonance: Your product name must resonate with your ideal customer, evoking the desired feeling, perception, or impression.

Scalability: Think long-term. Do you see this being a stand-alone product or if it's successful, could it grow into a larger product line? If you envision the latter, you'll want to take that into consideration when choosing a name.

Visibility: If people can't easily find and search for your product online, consider it dead on arrival.

Distinctiveness: Competition will be fierce. You want a name that will make your product stand out from the crowd.

Longevity: Don't be tempted to use the latest fad as inspiration for your new product name. Ask yourself, "will this name make sense to people in 20 years?"

Simplicity: Sometimes, we misspell something and Google figures out what we meant and points us in the right direction. But do you really want to leave it up to chance? Make sure your product name isn't too difficult to spell or pronounce; otherwise, people will have a hard time finding it and talking about it. Make it easy for your audience.

The Role of Your Product Name

Your product name should just sound cool (although that doesn't hurt), its primary job is to guide your ideal customer to buy it, by showing them why it's the right choice for them.

If you're in the market for a new laptop and because you carry it in your backpack all day, being lightweight is the most important feature for you, would you go for a MacBook Pro or a MacBook Air? There's a clear winner here.

The name of your product should also instill confidence in your brand. This is accomplished with consistency. If all of your product names sound like iPhone, iPad, iTunes, and you suddenly launch a new music service called "Streamy," it's going to sound random and could potentially cause your customers to lose trust in the brand.

Lastly, your product name should help your brand to generate buzz. You want your name to be the one that turns generic items into something specific. Think of brands that have made

a mark. How many of us ask for a Kleenex, even if we're reaching for a generic brand of facial tissue?

Questions to Consider Before Choosing a Product Name

- Should your product name be long or short?
- What's your product's value?
- Who's your target audience?
- What products do they already buy?
- Would your customers be more receptive to a real word or a word you made up?
- Should your product name evoke an emotion? Which one?
- Does your product name sound a lot like your competitors'?

10 Tips for Product Naming Success

1. Be Descriptive

The first place most people start when they have to name a product is to simply create a name that describes what the product does. Grammarly is a perfect example of a descriptive name. People use it to check their grammar. It can't get more descriptive than that!

2. Use Real Words with a Twist

Words don't have to be used literally in a product name. They can be suggestive like Ford's Mustang (it's fast and sleek) or Ford's Expedition (it's built for adventure).

3. Add a Prefix or Suffix

You can turn a common word into a product name simply by adding a prefix or suffix to it. Apple uses this product naming technique all the time with the iPhone, iPad, and iTunes offering perfect examples.

4. Create a Compound Word

Since so many brand and product names are already trademarked and the associated domain names have already been registered, it's very common these days for product names to be compound words made by putting two words together to form an entirely new brand or product name. PhotoShop, TurboTax, and Stick Ups are great examples.

5. Make up a Word

One way to ensure your product name is unique is to make up a word. Gatorade, Fritos, Doritos, and Tostitos are popular examples.

6. Change Spellings

Products like Trix, Kix, Fantastik, and Liquid-Plumr use real words that are misspelled. It's creative and helps when the name you want is already trademarked or the related domain names are taken.

7. Tweak and Blend Words

When a single word or a compound word won't do, you can tweak and blend words to create a brand or product name. For example, NyQuil is a tweak and blend of *night* and *tranquil*. Pictionary is a tweak and blend of *picture* and *dictionary*.

8. Use a Place or Person's Name

The Clark Bar was named after its creator, David L. Clark. The George Foreman Grill was named after its celebrity endorser. However, use caution when including a place or person's name in your product name.

A day may come when you want to expand out of that geographic area or the person whose name you used in the product name might leave to work for a competitor or in another industry, or worse, become part of a salacious scandal. Make sure your product name can withstand these types of changes

9. Create an Acronym or Use Initials or Numbers

Acronyms and initials are short, but they don't say much on their own. Therefore, you need to exercise caution when you use an acronym or initials in your product name. It typically takes longer to develop brand recognition and comprehension with a name filled with numbers and letters that is difficult to remember.

However, many companies have achieved great success in launching products with names that use numbers and letters. Honda's CRV, Toyota's Rav4, and even Formula 409 are examples of how this naming technique can work.

10. Use a Verb

You can use a verb as your product name (think Bounce dryer sheets) or you can turn a word used in your product name into a verb.

For example, the FaceTime application name has turned into a verb over the years. Today, it's common to say, "FaceTime me later and we'll talk."

The Swiffer product name is also used as a verb sometimes. It's not uncommon for a Swiffer user to say, "Look at that dust! I have to Swiffer that."

As you can see, it's okay to get creative when you name a product. As long as consumers are willing to accept the message and promise that your product name communicates, then you're on the path to success.

That's why it's so important that you test your ideas before going to market. Next, we'll cover some best practices for using quantitative research to test product names along with the value of your target audience.

Best Practices for Designing a Concept Test

A product naming survey (also called a concept test) offers deep insight into which names consumers respond most positively to. You can provide them with several choices and score them based on a number of factors like perception, trust, creativity, and more.

While you have the option of testing up to 200 alternatives, it's important to be respectful of consumers' time and consider providing your top 3-15 choices.

Begin with a detailed description of your product, along with an image that gives respondents a clear picture of the look and feel of your product.

Naming Questions

Ask questions to gauge how each name choice compares against your other options. Respondents can rank the names in order of preference, allowing you to see which ones come out on top.

You can also write questions that will help you determine which names respondents deem trustworthy, creative, cutting-edge, empathetic, and other criteria.

And be sure to ask for input from your respondents to see if they have any additional suggestions for names you hadn't thought of, based on their perception of the product.

Next, measure a consumer's willingness to purchase your product based on each individual name.

Lastly, include some open-ended questions to test what emotions a specific name may evoke.

Analyzing Your Results

Your results should show you the top names overall and in each category. Your analysis of the individual names will include sentiment, as well as critical data about the likelihood of a consumer purchasing your product.

Managing a ton of responses, especially from unstructured text, like open-ended questions, can be daunting. However, tools like aytm's Stats page make it super easy to display open-ended text via word cloud, allowing you to see which names stood out.

Testing product names allows you to remove the speculation from your decision-making process and launch your new product with confidence backed by solid data.