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Identity

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Identity *Leadership through Identity*

**To promote management
understanding of Identity
as a leadership tool**

Naming Services

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Our Naming Services

For many reasons but especially product proliferation, global marketing and the Web, the naming of products and companies is increasingly difficult. Yet because of the cost and clutter of communications, the importance of an effective name is more critical than ever. Brainstorming and good luck are no longer a prudent alternative to disciplined, experienced professional naming services.

Our process increases the chances of success. It is predicated on especially rigorous, disciplined planning, on the development of very large quantities of options, on creative collaboration with experienced intellectual property counsel, and on full client involvement in all key judgements.

Tony Spaeth has personally directed programs like:

Celera Genomics, the DNA decoding company

Chartway Technologies, formerly Sage Systems (software)

Flowserve, the merger of BW/IP and Durco industrial pump companies

Footstar, the corporate parent of Footaction and Kmart shoe operations

Inrange Technologies, formerly General Signal's Networks division

Pentegra, formerly Financial Institutions Retirement Fund

Primis Custom Publishing Services, a McGraw-Hill business

Provis, repositioning a medical peer review organization

Scirex, a new leader in pharmaceutical clinical trials management

In earlier tenures, at NWAyer Spaeth found and proposed the name Absolut for a new vodka brand and at the firm Anspach Grossman Portugal, directed naming of the Optima card among many other brands and companies.

Naming Process Overview

Little is proprietary in the overall nature and sequence of naming steps:

1. Fact-finding
2. Naming Plan
3. Generation of 'master list' of candidate names
4. First cut selections, by consultant
5. Second cut selections, with client
6. Preliminary legal-availability search
7. Triage and 'short list' selection
8. Linguistic evaluation
9. Comprehensive searches
10. Oral/aural evaluation
11. Graphic demonstration and evaluation
12. Market research evaluation (when appropriate)
13. Final legal risk evaluation
14. Name decision

Any naming activity must in some way incorporate these steps. Our confidence of a successful result derives from our quantitative push for diversity and creativity in generation, and especially from the thoroughness of our planning discipline.

The Planning Component

The Naming Plan channels creative efforts in the most promising, constructive directions. (Sometimes, however, the most important function of the Naming Plan is to enforce greater clarity in the underlying business proposition.) Our naming plans have nine sections:

- 1 First, what are the primary and secondary "objects of the name?" That is, defined in terms of the noun it designates, what are we primarily naming? (This is not always self evident, and can be the key to breakthroughs in positioning as well as in naming.)
- 2 Next, who are the priority users of the name, the occasions of use, and the needs and feelings of the users on those occasions? This discipline puts us in the mind of the customer, not the namer.
- 3 In what special media must the name function, and with what implications?
- 4 What other language, or nomenclature, will surround the name? Nomenclature can include language such as a generic descriptor, a companion product, corporate and brand endorsement, principal business unit names or other subcomponent names, and slogans or theme lines. Understand or create these and naming becomes easier.
- 5 Functional criteria. Functional considerations are legal availability (category, geography), distinctiveness, phonetics, linguistic attributes, brevity, and required communicative functionality.
- 6 Image and personality criteria. What tone, or style should the name convey? Image and personality criteria should come from a clear understanding of the product, brand or institutional personality, as articulated in the identity platform. They can be rich sources of solution ideas.
- 7 Appropriate name types. There are many kinds of names. The naming plan indicates which types are most likely to meet the functional and image criteria, to help focus creative effort. The universe of name types includes preexisting names, real words capable of use in a different way, and coined or created inventions:

<i>Proper</i>	<i>Dictionary</i>	<i>Created</i>
Person	Descriptive	Real-sounding
Place	Imagistic	Combination
	Arbitrary	Acronym
	Imported	Alphanumeric
		Abstract

- 8 Can the name do its essential job (which is merely to designate) and also convey some kind of information? The category or industry, perhaps? Geography? Size? A distinctive attribute?

If so, what kinds of information are potentially most useful? This list can be a rich source of naming ideas.

- 9 The naming plan ends with a starting list of directional naming ideas. These help to give our name-generating team (which includes the client) their work assignments.

After approval of the naming plan, name generation begins.

Masterlist Generation

As a general rule, name generation hasn't even begun until 300 candidates have been generated, and we occasionally are more comfortable with 1,000. Master lists for some of our programs have exceeded 2,000 candidate names.

Quantity serves several purposes. It helps to force creativity in ever expanding directions, in turn stimulating new ideas; it demonstrates that this has been done; it provides a backup resource should a restart become necessary.

The exception, when quantity is less important than precision, is the business situation in which a non-proprietary descriptive name best meets the criteria.

Name generation techniques can include:

- Individual creativity of experienced namers, on staff and recruited on assignment.
- Group creativity, when budget permits, applying our "Synectics" brainstorming training.
- Search of our proprietary archive of many thousand name ideas from previous programs, coded by direction.
- Computerized name generation, using proprietary as well as published software.
- Sometimes, a client employee 'contest.'

Contests are tricky. With or without a contest, clients are urged to contribute candidates at the outset and throughout the process. (Normally no record is kept of contributors; pride of authorship belongs to the process, rather than the idea generator.)

Selection, Screening and Clearance Steps

The client receives our suggested first cut list, along with the backup candidates and the two combined, the alphabetized master list. We often categorize the candidates in the first cut list by naming direction. With client participation, we then jointly select from 20 to as many as 40 potentially viable solutions (the quantity depending on the legal profile of the category), for preliminary availability screening.

Clients are responsible, with counsel, for all legal judgments. Often, however, to minimize time and costs this first screening step is performed for our client by a leading specialist counsel experienced in working with us... R. J. Heher, of the San Francisco firm of Fenwick & West, and overseas associates as required. Jointly we craft a legal search strategy to balance search costs and time requirements.

In triage fashion, candidates are identified as **probably**, **possibly**, and **probably not** available, and a "short list" selected from the first two categories.

In addition to full legal search, the short list is then evaluated for linguistic safety, phonetic clarity and graphic potential, to assist in final name recommendations. We make every effort to present at least two and preferably three final, available options for client selection.

Consumer or other-audience research can be an invaluable assistance in intermediate and final screening of name candidates for products and services. In the naming of companies, as a practical matter consumer research is less often of value; better decisions are likely to be made on the basis of the technical and strategic merits of the candidate names than on the basis of audience reaction. We encourage focus groups or similar research when the name is primarily for marketing use. We can assist as desired in research design, sourcing, direction and interpretation.

Time and Cost Considerations

The naming process can take as little as five weeks (assuming availability of the necessary participants and prompt decisions). Eight to ten weeks should be sufficient in most cases, excluding market research. This includes preliminary legal search, which today can be a 24-hour proposition, and a round of comprehensive U.S. final and international preliminary search. Full international search requires additional time.

Professional service fees must vary, of course, in proportion to the required complexity of the fact finding and planning phase, category conditions, the economic and strategic load that the name must carry, and client decision and approvals process requirements. We have provided naming services ranging from \$12,000 to \$40,000 (legal costs not included). We are pleased to provide more specific estimates, together with professional references, on request.