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## Next Project for eProject: A New Name

By [STUART ELLIOTT](#)

Not that long ago, when it came to corporate branding the “I’s” had it, and so, too, did the “E’s,” as marketers sought to signal they were part of the Internet boom by starting their names with those vowels.

That was then and this is now, a business software company is declaring in a campaign to promote a rebranding. The campaign drops a name adopted in 1997 in favor of one meant to be more contemporary and inclusive.

The campaign celebrates the renaming of the software company, eProject, as Daptiv, effective immediately. The company, which is based in Seattle, lists among its clients ATA Airlines, BP, Chanel, [Merrill Lynch](#), [Ohio State University](#) and Real Networks; its lead investors include the venture-capital firms of Bay Partners and Kennet Ventures.

The campaign, which is being handled internally, includes banner ads; a presence on social-networking Web sites like [Facebook](#), LinkedIn and [MySpace](#); search-engine marketing; and a new corporate Web site, with an address bearing the [new name](#).

The idea to adopt Daptiv — rhymes with “captive” — came from Catchword Branding, a consulting company in Oakland, Calif. The Palo Alto, Calif., office of a design and brand-identity firm that Catchword often works with, Michael Patrick Partners, collaborated on the effort.

The budget to create and introduce the new name is being estimated at \$347,500 — a thrifty sum that reflects the lower cost of campaigns that appear predominantly in the new media.

The renaming is indicative of the fashions and foibles of corporate branding, which is becoming an increasingly important aspect of marketing as a company’s name becomes a global asset in an online world.

As a name, eProject “was not bad,” says Tim Low, vice president for marketing at the company, and “people were starting to recognize it.”

“But it did reek of 1997,” he adds.

Equally unfortunate, says Mr. Low, who joined the company about 13 months ago from [Microsoft](#), was the fact that the previous name “did not allow us the flexibility to offer new services.”

“We made our name in online project management,” he adds, “but we felt the name was a little bit constrictive” as the company sought to expand its offerings.

The decision to change names was “not simple,” Mr. Low says. “We discussed it a lot.”

“Ultimately, we decided there was no time like the present,” he adds, because it would become “only more

difficult to do in the future.”

After the decision was made at the end of last year, Catchword was hired in February, Mr. Low recalls. Meetings in Seattle between the executives of eProject and Catchword followed soon after.

“They recognized two issues with the existing name,” says Burt Alper, principal at Catchword.

“One, it was very dated,” he says. “The initial ‘e’ has had its time and gone.”

“The other problem was that the name was very specific to project management,” he adds, echoing Mr. Low, “and very specific names can pigeonhole you as your company evolves.”

The team at Catchword working with eProject “talked a lot with them about how edgy they wanted the new name to sound,” Mr. Alper says.

That is particularly an issue in business-to-business marketing, he adds, because companies “need to maintain some credibility” with current and potential clients and thus should “strike a balance between sounding edgy and reliable so as not to scare off customers with an eccentric or irreverent name.”

Typically when Catchword works with a client, a team will generate 2,000 to 2,500 “name candidates,” Mr. Alper says, which are culled to about 200.

Those are sent to an internal evaluation team that checks for availability as trade names and domain names. Needless to say, the latter is crucial in a wired marketplace.

The potential names are also screened through what Mr. Alper calls a “linguistic analysis” to make sure they are appropriate in other languages, also important as more marketers sell products and services abroad.

In the last presentation to the eProject executives, Mr. Alper says, Catchword submitted six names, including Daptiv. (He declines to discuss the others, as does Mr. Low.)

The Catchword team “was pretty comfortable with all of them,” Mr. Alper says, and was “thrilled” when Daptiv was picked.

Daptiv is a good choice because “it sounds very current,” he adds, noting the trend “to alter spellings to create distinctions,” citing the [Motorola Razr](#) cellphone and the photo-sharing Web site Flickr.

“But since Daptiv is based on a real English word,” Mr. Alper says, “there’s also a sense of stability” that may be missing from more fanciful coined words.

“It’s also short and easy to pronounce,” he adds, “and the dot-com domain was available for registration.”

Mr. Low was similarly effusive about the selection.

Daptiv “was the one the most people on the management team thought was the most flexible,” Mr. Low says. “It achieves our primary objective, to be less descriptive than our previous brand.”

“And it was short,” he adds.

The executives also like the “connotations” of the new name, Mr. Low says, especially “the nod to ‘adaptive.’ ”

Indeed, if you search for “Daptiv” on [google.com](http://google.com), this pops up: “Did you mean ‘adaptive?’ ”

The [daptiv.com](http://daptiv.com) Web address went live on Oct. 31, followed by a switch of names on Web ad banners and search-engine Web sites.

Many of the messages in the campaign are straightforward. For instance, on Web banners that proclaim “The future of on-demand business software is here,” at the bottom there is a message that reads, “eProject is now Daptiv.”

The Daptiv group on Facebook.com ([facebook.com/group.php?gid=13077250426](http://facebook.com/group.php?gid=13077250426)) presents the name change as the main item under the “recent news” section

“We are excited to tell you that eProject has changed its name to Daptiv,” the entry begins.

As for how the name change will play out, Mr. Low says, “Brands take on connotations as they’re out there.”

“I’d like to tell you in 2008 what customers say Daptiv means,” he adds.

Mr. Low, it is a deal.

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