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QUALITIES OF GREAT BRAND NAMES

A brand name is a very, very short story and a powerful tool to connect with your audience. But what makes a brand name great? Here are 10 essential qualities:

- 1 **Engaging and memorable** Great names spark the imagination with a magnetic story—think Tesla, Asana, and Häagen-Dazs—or through poetic devices like consonance, assonance, and alliteration, a la Javiva.
- 2 **Distinctive, provocative, buzz-inspiring** It's called branding, not blanding. Vudu stands out amidst other streaming services, and Pandora, Rent-A-Wreck, and Banana Republic have all spun negatives into intriguing brands.
- 3 **Appropriate for your brand** Great names authentically express your brand message, positioning, and voice. Fitbit Zip, One, Flex, and Force telegraph energy and simplicity. Nature's Promise is the perfect umbrella name for Ahold's line of 500+ natural/organic products.
- 4 **Flexible & Enduring** Will the name remain relevant if the business model changes, the brand travels to international markets, or cultural trends shift? Amazon is expansive; Book World, limiting.
- 5 **Culturally sensitive** Is the name free of serious negative meaning in major languages? If the name is shortened, could that suggest something offensive? Virgin is edgy but works for its target market. Bodega is culturally tone-deaf—and got burned for it.
- 6 **Available and protectable** Is the name in the clear for trademark? Is the domain name available or easily modified with an intuitive descriptor? Non-English names like Roku—meaning “six” in Japanese—can be easier to own and protect.
- 7 **Concise** Less is usually more. Multi-word names get abbreviated into meaningless initialisms, and names often need to be shorter to fit on packaging. Nest, Nike, and VW Atlas all get straight to the point.
- 8 **Easy to spell and pronounce** If people struggle to say your name—out loud or in their mind—they'll have a harder time remembering it, looking for it, and typing it into a search engine. Popchips is fun and easy. Lumada is bright and intuitive.
- 9 **Natural sounding** Names should be aurally pleasing and appropriate in the languages of your customers. A portmanteau like Verizon rolls off the tongue, Jamba Juice is delightfully alliterative, and Eska sounds highly refreshing.
- 10 **Visually evocative** A great name evokes compelling imagery to enrich the story and enhance engagement. FireEye conjures up intense vigilance, while the five dots in Kijiji visually represent a group of people—perfect for a name that means “village” in Swahili.