

C2A Awards 2022 Entry

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Client: Denim (formerly Axle Payments)

Project: Denim: Company Rebranding

Category entered: Branding: Corporate Identity

Enclosed: Entry Summary (one-sheet)
Entry Case Study



Rebranding Axle Payments, shipping finance experts

Catchword developed a new brand for Axle Payments, a trusted fintech solutions provider specializing in freight and logistics.

Founded in 2017, Axle Payments was created to help freight brokers work smarter and grow faster by automating their back-office and providing affordable working capital. By working to digitize the financial infrastructure of freight and logistics, Axle Payments was addressing one of the most debilitating pain points for any business—cashflow problems.

But the company’s founders—two childhood friends passionate about how tech can transform transportation—saw a future beyond truck shipping finance to logistics in other areas, including aviation and rail. And when the pandemic exposed the weakness of today’s supply chains, they began to think about a universal, resilient freight payments network for moving all goods worldwide. This vision required a new brand, not tied to a terrestrial vehicle metaphor. They turned to Catchword to help developing a new brand positioning, company name, and visual identity.

This company and its offerings are durable and versatile, your go-to for every freight and logistics finance need, a tightly woven fabric of software and services you can trust to get the job done. *Denim* encapsulates these values perfectly. It’s as reliable, essential, and universal as the fabric that made America.

Denim is unexpected and unique in the space, clearly standing out from competitor names such as *Convoy*, *Uber Freight*, *Haul Pay*, and *eCapital*, making it more engaging and stickier for potential customers. It’s easy to say and spell, with a meaning familiar to audiences around the world. It’s graphically rich, inspiring the denim blue of the new identity. Plus, the exact .com was acquirable, an important want for the client.

The client was delighted and launched the new brand in September 2022, leaning hard into the new brand positioning and name story in its rollout materials. Fritz Lauer, Denim’s Head of Marketing, delivered a 5-star review for Catchword to Clutch, the #1 creative services agency review platform: “Their process and expertise were outstanding.”





Rebranding Axle Payments, shipping finance experts

Context

The financial needs around freight transport are far more complex than most people realize. Literally tons of goods need to get from here to there, which means invoicing, payment, collection, and more. Carriers need to get paid quickly, but freight brokers and shippers typically take 40-90 days (and some even longer). Cashflow can be a serious problem for everyone involved, causing bottlenecks that slow down commerce and weaken businesses.

Freight factoring was developed to address this need in the trucking industry. With factoring, the carrier gets paid right away by outsourcing the collections process to a third party who buys the invoice at a slightly reduced rate.



Axle Payments was founded in 2017 to automate back-office processes for factoring, thus freeing truckers to focus on the efficient, safe transport of goods and freeing freight brokers to grow their business. By 2019, it had launched its core payments platform, which enables freight brokers and logistics companies to efficiently manage carrier payment, invoicing, and collections.



But the company's founders—two childhood friends passionate about how tech can transform transportation—wanted to do more. They saw beyond truck shipping finance to logistics in other areas, including aviation and rail, with insurance and credit-card products down the line. And when the pandemic exposed the fragility of today's supply chains, they began to think about a universal, resilient freight payments network

for moving all goods worldwide. This vision required a brand that wasn't tied to a terrestrial vehicle metaphor, and they turned to Catchword for help.

Challenges

A serious rebranding project typically takes many months for research, brand strategy and positioning, name development, preliminary trademark screening, identity system design, and brand book, but Axle was on a tight timetable and needed it all done in eight weeks.

Good company names must check many boxes, and this project was no exception. The new name needed to

- Richly convey the brand themes and story
- Express the brand personality and tone
- Appeal to and engage target audiences
- Separate the brand from the competition
- Be easy to say, spell, and remember
- Be ownable, trademarkable
- Remain relevant as the company evolves



In addition, the client strongly wanted an exact .com domain name.

Brand Strategy

Via interviews and multiple creative exercises, Catchword worked closely with the client team to map out the landscape, including audiences and competitors, and articulate the brand fundamentals.

Primary audiences

- Now: Owners and CEOs of freight brokerages
- Future: Carriers and shippers

Competitors

We identified dozens of competitors, generally with names that signaled shipping (AtoB, Road Sync), finance (Phoenix Capital, Triumph Pay, TBS Factoring, Single Point Capital, Universal Funding), or both (Haul Pay). Philosophy: "When they win, we win." The company is known for empathy and compassion for customers.

Brand Elements

Brand pillars: Reliable, Essential, Universal

Mission: We help build a stronger supply chain by facilitating the free flow of money and data for shippers, brokers, and carriers through our financial products, operations tools, and time-saving automation.

Reason to believe: Customers choose the company because they want be free of capital constraints and to grow and scale. Specifically the company delivers

- tech-centric, innovative financial services
- best-in-class user experience
- an integrated platform to handle payment workflows seamlessly
- flexible financial options that scale with their business and enable growth

Name Development

We then identified the following parameters to guide our development of a large set of names that will support the brand objectives.

Naming Parameters

Brand messaging themes

- Enable, assist, provide tools to everyone
- Trust, transparency
- Care, empathy, support
- Automation, simplicity
- Ecosystem, all in one place, integration



Brand personality & tone

During discussion with the client, R2D2 from Star Wars became a symbol of the brand.

- Warm, approachable, friendly, playful yet wise
- Trustworthy, reliable
- Tech-forward

Style: Metaphoric names and personal names that suggest the brand themes would

- increase memorability and emotional engagement
- stand out from competitors

Construction: Shorter, real English words and natural-sounding coined words would

- be easy to spell, pronounce, and remember for a wide range of demographics, including a potential future international audience
- meet the personality and tone objectives

Name Development Process

We conducted two robust rounds of creative (approx 1,000 names developed) from which we selected 100 names to present the client, including a number available as exact .coms. After legal review, the client was left with several candidates. Because Axle was built on practical tech by and for real working people, *Denim* was the right fit—and it was acquirable as a domain name.

Denim is unexpected and unique in the space, clearly standing out from competitor names such as *Convoy*, *Uber Freight*, *Haul Pay*, and *eCapital*, making it more engaging and stickier for potential customers. It's easy to say and spell, with a meaning familiar to audiences around the world.

Name Story

Denim and its offerings are versatile and durable, your go-to, a tightly woven fabric of software and services you can trust to get the job done. It's tough and built to last. Reliable, essential, and universal—and as game-changing and liberating as the fabric that made America.



Visual Identity & Brand Book

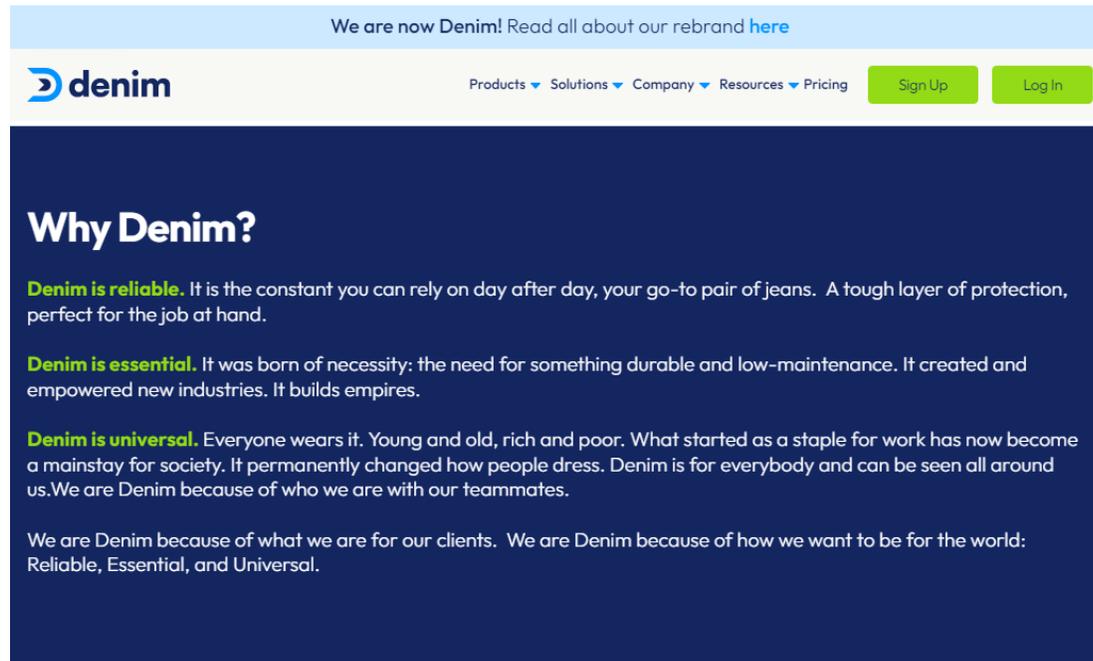
Denim is graphically rich, inspiring the denim blue of the new identity. The logo starts with a variation on the capital *D*, with nested shapes that convey collaboration, support, and the ordered complexity that is logistics. The negative space at left forms an arrow, communicating forward motion—both the literal movement of goods and the progress the company enables. The wordmark is simple (all lowercase, sans serif) and stylish, just like blue jeans.



Result

Denim announced the rebrand in September 2022 following the close of a \$126m Series B. The positioning and brand pillars Catchword developed appear verbatim on the new site and are evident throughout the company's marketing materials.

www.denim.com

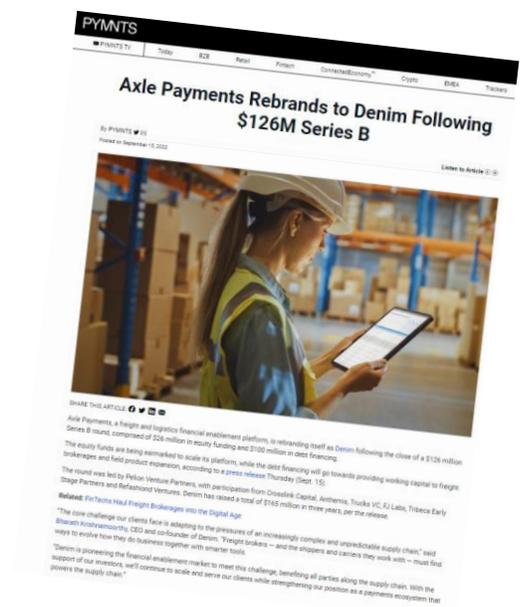


Rebrand Reception

The client was delighted with the richness and authenticity of the new brand. Its marketing team was especially pleased to have such fertile ground for campaigns and copy.

The rebrand was picked up by financial media.

Fritz Lauer, Denim's Head of Marketing, was moved to provide a detailed 5-star review for Catchword's work on leading ranking platform Clutch (see below).



September 6, 2022. Full review at <https://clutch.co/profile/catchword#reviews>

Summary Focus Portfolio

Reviews

5.0 ★★★★★ 86 REVIEWS >

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THE PROJECT Rebranding & Naming for Freight Brokers Financial Platform 🗨 Branding 💰 \$50,000 to \$199,999 📅 May - Sep. 2022 Project summary: Catchword provided naming and branding services for a freight brokers financial platform. They did interviews, went through various creative workshop sessions, and delivered two rounds of 500 names.	THE REVIEW 5.0 ★★★★★ Quality: 5.0 Schedule: 5.0 Cost: 5.0 Willing to refer: 5.0 SEP 6, 2022 Feedback summary: Internal stakeholders were highly satisfied with Catchword's quality work and performance. The project was a success, and they delivered the work in three months. They managed the project seamlessly and were responsive and available. Overall, they stood out for their detailed process and expertise. Minimize Review ^	THE REVIEWER Head of Marketing, Denim  Fritz Lauer 🏢 Financial Services 👤 11-50 Employees 📍 Boston, Massachusetts 🗨 Phone Interview ? ✔ Verified
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THE REVIEW	<p>A Clutch analyst personally interviewed this client over the phone. Below is an edited transcript. ⓧ</p>
Background	<p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>Introduce your business and what you do there.</p> <p>I'm the head of marketing of Denim, a factoring service for freight brokers and intermediaries. We provide a financial platform to connect payments across the logistics industry. We're a remote-first company, so we have employees all around the globe.</p>
Challenge	<p>OPPORTUNITY / CHALLENGE</p> <p>What challenge were you trying to address with Catchword?</p> <p>We were going through a rebranding process, so we had to rename and redesign our website. We split up the project because we wanted to shorten our timeline. However, we wanted to make sure that we got our name right, so we wanted to find a great branding and naming agency.</p>