



THE C42D STARTUP SERIES

How to name your brand (and get it right)

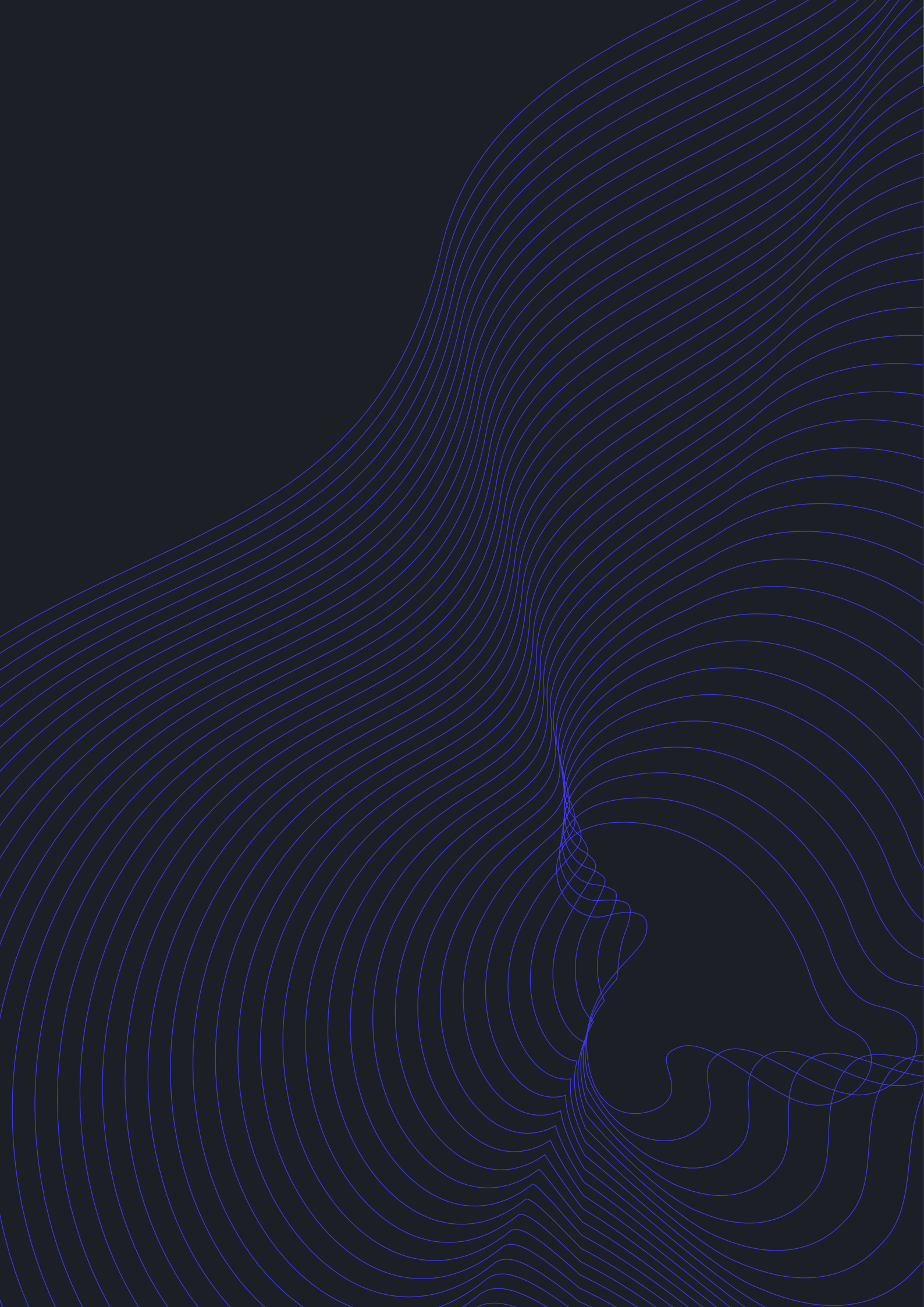
BY DAVID CARD



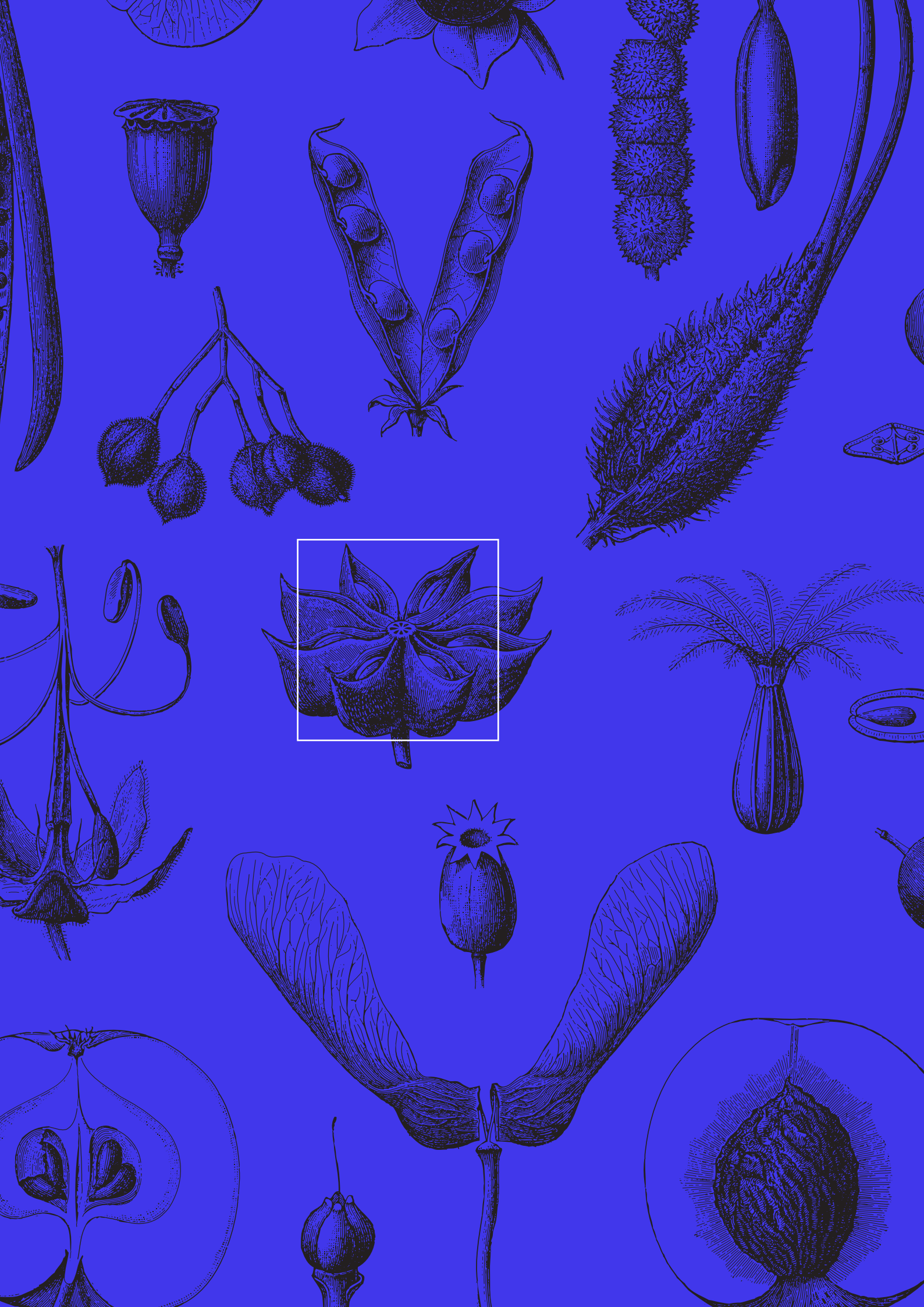
CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 – Introduction	05
02 – Brand Naming Archetypes.....	13
03 – The Brand Naming Process.....	25
04 – In Conclusion.....	39



INTRODUCTION



Introduction

Every business begins as an idea, a kernel in one's mind. A vision of how a new product or service can help solve a problem, making the lives or jobs of others easier. Then comes the hours upon hours of brainstorming, meetings and calls, and planning sessions. The business plan, the positioning, the differentiation that's going to set your company apart from the rest. You've hired the best people you can find to help bring this dream to life, and you have grand plans for how the company will grow and last long into the future.

But then, you have to pick a name. And you have no idea what to call your company.

Or worse, you chose a name and don't feel it's up to par.

And the thing about a name? It's forever.*

That's why we're here. This naming guide is all you need to ensure you've taken every step, considered every option, and, ultimately, have settled on the right name for your brand. It's an in-depth look at everything we've learned about the ins and outs of brand naming. It's how we ensure that all of our clients end up with a name that feels right and true to their brand, an *ownable* name that will project the company in the best possible light to the outside world—and connects with audiences.

Many things go into naming a brand. Though naming is a creative endeavor, it's a process best completed by following a step-by-step how-to, like this guide presents.

But before we get into the *how* it's essential to understand the *what* and the *why*.

**Ok, you can always re-brand, but that's a whole 'nother demon, deserving of its own guide.*



How Important is Your Brand Name?

It's understandable to feel that a name is the most important part of a brand. Let's say you're wearing a new winter coat, and your friend approaches you and tells you how much they like it. It's unlikely that you'll respond, at first, by describing how comfortable it is, describing the colors and the features, telling them how it's really warm, and you feel good about supporting the company that makes it because they only use sustainable materials and processes. That might be all well and good, but what your friend desires to know right away is pretty obvious: what's it called?

That might make it seem like the brand name is the single most crucial aspect, a make-or-break mark that creates the difference between a company's success or failure. While undoubtedly important, a brand name is just a part of the whole brand. A company with an excellent product, compelling positioning, and robust strategy isn't going to be torpedoed solely because it has a mediocre name.

Likewise, a company lacking in the other fundamentals but has a unique, memorable, and flat-out cool name may sound like it's destined for success. Still, the name simply isn't enough to keep a rickety ship afloat.

The name may seem like the most important thing, but it's only a piece of the mosaic that makes up your brand. A name is just like any other aspect of the brand or firm—whether or not it's successful is dependent on the foundation upon which it is built. All of the crucial core aspects of a brand—its positioning, purpose and values, and differentiation from the marketplace—are undergirding the brand name.

That's why you see many different types of successful brand names out there. We'll get to all the fun and distinct ways you can come up with a name a little later on in this guide. First, there are a few qualities that every successful brand name has in common that it's essential to familiarize yourself with.

What Makes a Brand Name Successful?

Picking a brand name is intimidating, not least because it can often feel like all the good names have already been taken. But that's not the case, any more than it is to say all the good band names have been taken. In the 1980s, decades after the onset of rock and roll, Guns N' Roses debuted. Two decades later, a spin-off of the band came out, named Velvet Revolver. If one artist can be in two of the coolest-named bands ever, you can develop something fun and creative for your brand!


Necessity breeds creativity, and there's no better time to get creative than brainstorming your brand name. Since it can feel like your brand name needs to be something that stands out, well, that's because it is. A good brand name is unique and distinctive. It's something that, eventually, your customers will connect to emotionally—not simply because of the name, but because of the experience they have with your brand.

While it must have been tempting to create an obviously sporty or athletic-sounding name when creating a particular shoe brand in the 1970s, the creators opted to look to Greek mythology. Sports is a competition, and it feels good to win. The Greek goddess of victory? A deity named Nike. Now, Nike is synonymous with athletics and fitness the world over.

Nike is also an excellent example of the next key characteristic of any successful brand name. Nike may have started as just a sneaker brand, but then it became much more. It added other types of products and apparel and now is a fully-formed lifestyle brand. A good brand name is elastic; it can change and grow with the brand.

The stories of narrow-seeming products and services that ended up becoming much, much more are endless. Think Amazon. It started as an online bookstore. If the founders had decided to call the site WebBooks, it would have been pretty weird once they started selling other goods on their site. "I bought these golf clubs on WebBooks," doesn't sound quite right, does it?

Now, Amazon is everything from the place we buy same-day delivery groceries, to the world's largest bookstore, to an Academy and Emmy-Award winning studio. Now, you can say "Stream this show on Amazon," and it makes total sense. An effective brand name allows the company to grow and allows the strength of the brand to drive the company into additional markets and sectors.

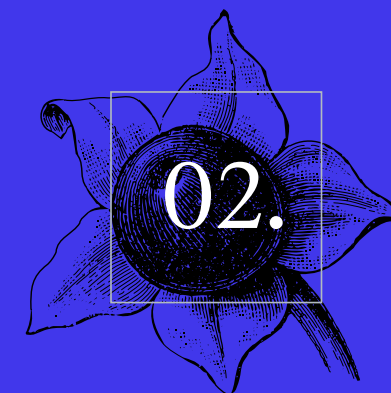


A GOOD NAME IS ELASTIC; IT CAN CHANGE AND GROW WITH THE BRAND.

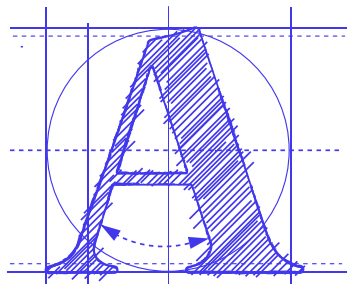
And though you think it may go without saying, perhaps the most critical aspect of any brand name is that it is *ownable and trademarkable*. Later in this guide, we get into the full nuts-and-bolts of checking whether or not your brand name has been trademarked and how to trademark it for yourself. But the key to remember is that if you can't trademark it, toss the name into the waste bin.

In terms of owning your brand name, many companies often get unnecessarily hung up on their web domain. They might have landed on the perfect brand name, and they can trademark it, but the domain name has already been taken—and it's either too expensive to buy, or it's simply not up for sale. While this can feel disconcerting, a domain name should never be a deciding factor between whether or not you opt for a name.

Instead, you can always add a word to your domain name to make it unique. You can often add the word "get" or the phrase "we are" in front of your brand name to create a unique and ownable domain. While websites are still hugely important for brands of all sizes, the web address is less significant. Many people will likely Google your name to get to your site or arrive at it via a link from a social media platform or another third-party source. Like the brand name itself, the name of the web domain is nothing compared to the content on your site and the way consumers experience it.



BRAND NAMING ARCHETYPES



What do we mean by Archetypes?

Naming, like anything else, is a bit of a copycat game. When someone does something, and it works, others will naturally follow suit. This is how we end up with categories or archetypes. Now, that doesn't mean that following what others have done before is in any way uncreative or will leave you with a name that isn't unique or strong. Thinking about archetypes is an effective way to brainstorm names. It gives you an excellent grounding to start from, knowing that many successful names have similar structures or features. You can always deviate, but the archetypes provide a solid launching-off point and direction for eventually picking a name.

Following are some naming archetypes that have worked for many brands. You may or may not find your name within these, but there's no doubt they have been in use and successful for years:

01. The Founder

Not everyone has a name that lends itself to a memorable and unique brand name, like Walt **Disney** or Conrad **Hilton**. But did those names lend themselves naturally to being great brand names, or did they simply become that because of the success of their companies? Either way, a company can always try to use a founder's name, provided it has at least some level of uniqueness to it (sorry to all the Smiths out there!).

Additionally, companies can always use things like a founder's initials, nickname, or a play on their name. For instance, **Adidas** comes from the founder's name, Adolf "Adi" Dassler, while Oprah Winfrey's production company goes by **Harpo**—or Oprah spelled backward.



02. Word Combo

This is a concept that is having a bit of a moment and seems in some ways like a modern trend, but it also goes back a long time. **FedEx** is the combination of the words Federal Express, and that type of naming convention has withstood the test of time. Many modern brands across industries have utilized this combination tactic—think software company **HubSpot**, jeans and apparel company **Madewell**, and women’s fertility brand **Kindbody**.

Many brands get a name by making up a completely new word, which can be effective, but combining words to create a unique name has one built-in advantage: words that already exist have meaning—they already conjure up images and feelings in people, which a brand can use to its advantage.

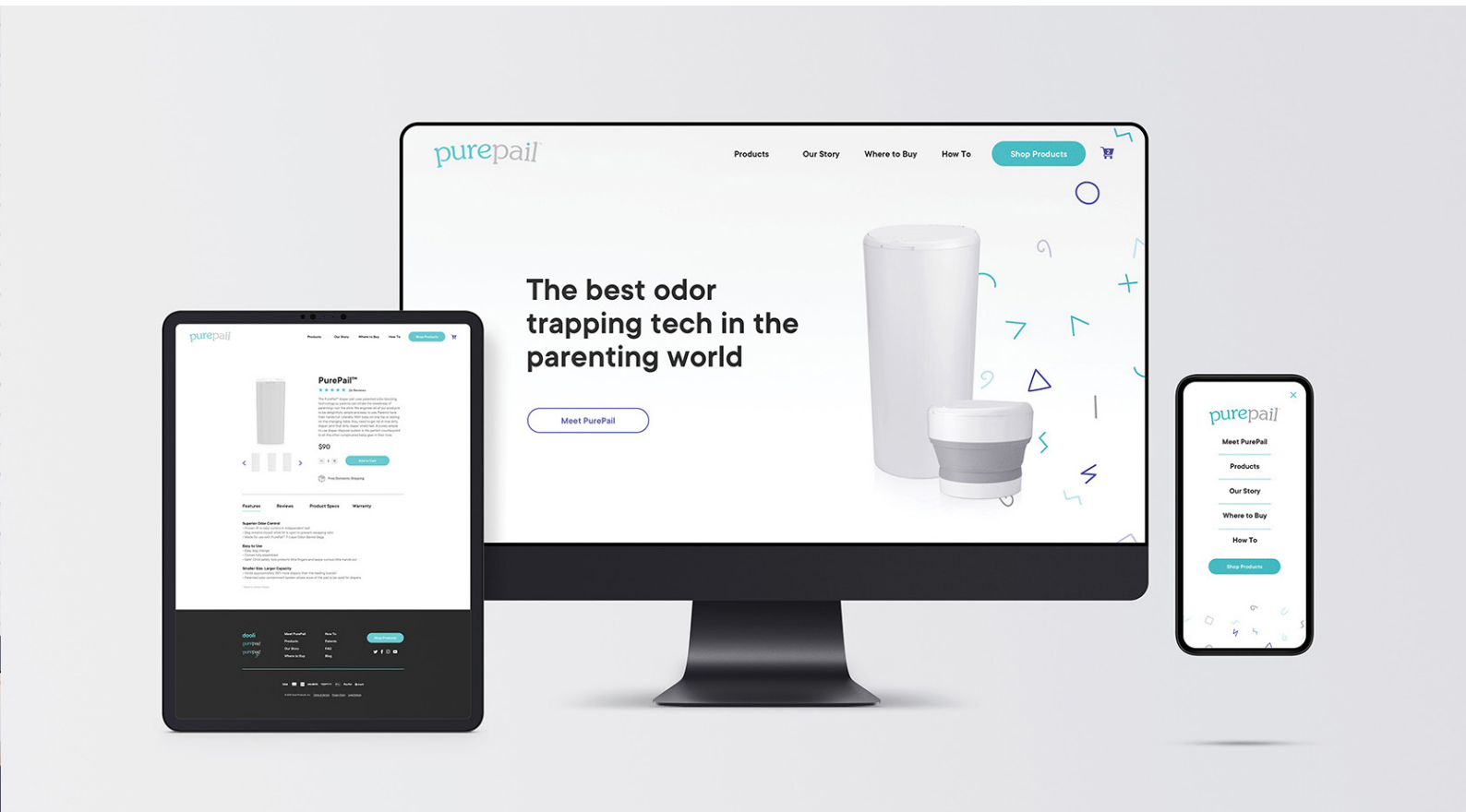


Interested in Kindbody? [Check out the case study here.](#)

03. Rhyming and Alliteration

We want brand names to be memorable, and one way to ensure that people don’t forget the name is to create a name that rolls right off the tongue. Rhyming and alliteration are literary methods going back centuries that have been utilized to create earworms—words and phrases that stick in our minds. On the rhyming front, ticket reseller **StubHub** is a good example (and is also a word combo, as it also combines two already existing words). **YouTube** may not rhyme perfectly, but the vowel sound is close enough to just about count, providing a name with a nice rhythm to it when spoken out loud.

Alliteration is when you repeat the same or similar consonant sounds back to back. The repetition often grabs attention and creates a friendly and pleasing rhythm. **Jamba Juice**, **Purepail**, **Best Buy**, **Dunkin’ Donuts**... the list here goes on and on.



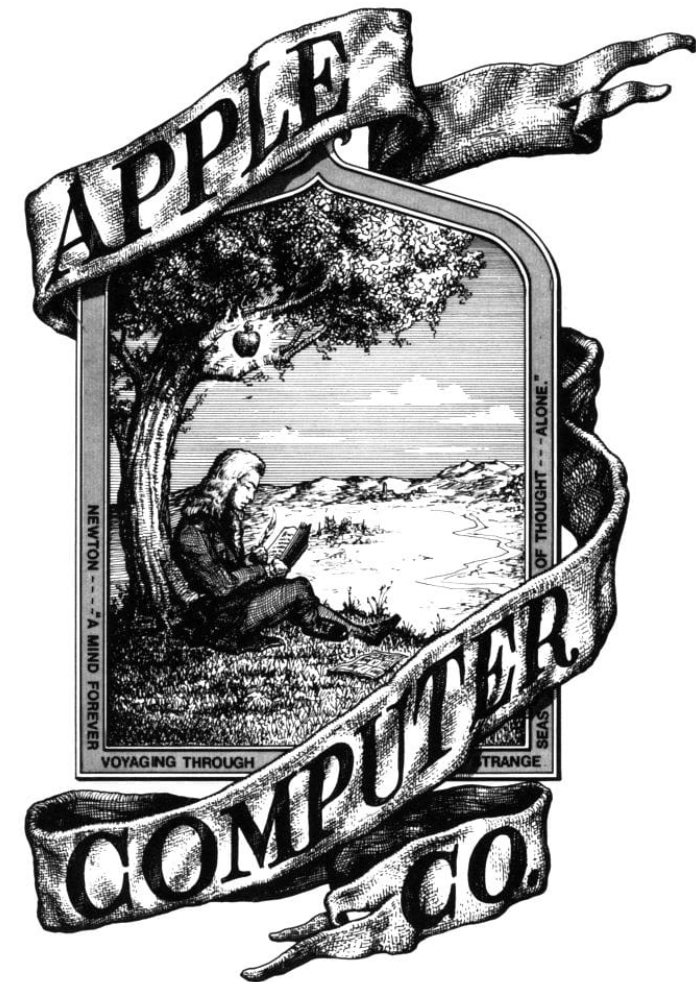
Interested in Purepail? [Check out the case study here.](#)

04. Appropriation

Appropriation is a strong naming strategy, but one that requires a bit more creativity and thinking due to its openness. Appropriation is when you take the meaning of an existing object or concept and apply it to something new. Many effective names are the result of appropriation. It may be one of the most common fruits in the world, but Steve Jobs's decision to call his company **Apple**, and the company's massive success, have totally reframed the meaning of this simple and often-used word. More recently, the mobile payment company Square has done a similar thing—the shape itself has nothing to do with money or payments, but the name has been very successful thus far and will likely continue to be. Other examples include Plaid, Cedar, and Tap, a brand created here at C42D.

Like the tactic of combining already existing words, simply choosing one existing word has the advantage of familiarity with the public and can bring a connotation or imagery. The key is to ensure that your name is on strategy with the personality and tone you are trying to achieve with the brand.

As noted earlier in this guide, a name is just one aspect of your brand. Everything else that goes into the brand-building process is crucial, and those core, foundational aspects will help inform the name. Brand-building is a complicated process, but getting it right is key to long-term success. C42D is here to shepherd you through that dizzying and stressful process from beginning to end.





05. Personification

A company isn't a person, but a company has a personality, values, and purpose just like a person. So why not name your brand like you'd name a person?

Though using a person's name can feel similarly intimidating to using a popular or common existing word, it can be very effective if done correctly. Personification is a trend we've seen take off recently, especially in the healthcare space. The new-age health insurance company Oscar is one example, as is Roman, which is a digital health clinic for men.

As with all names, cultural context is crucial. Regardless of your politics, it's probably not the best business idea to name your company Hillary or Donald, right?

06. Coined Word

This one's for the creative among the creatives. It's challenging to coin your own phrase or word, but if you can do so, you'll likely come up with a memorable, unique name. We recently helped an office supply company come up with their name—**Repli**. It comes from the act of what copiers do, replicate. By siphoning off the last half of the word, we helped create a unique name that also carries an instant and strong association.

Another example from the C42D archives is **Concertiv**, a trusted partner for professional services companies. This name was inspired by the almost musical-like harmony their team brings to all engagements.

Coined words can be challenging and tough to crack, but they are worth exploring, especially if you plan to register your trademarked name in a crowded category (like health care).

CONCERTIV

Interested in Repli? [Check out the case study here.](#)





07. Geography

Is there anything unique or cool about the place where your brand was founded, or where the founder lives or is originally from? Is there an inspirational area of the world that connects to your strategy? Many brands utilize location to inspire a name. That may feel like it's boxing you in—after all, if your brand grows in popularity, won't a localized name hold you back? Not entirely—many prominent brand names are based on locations, like **Budweiser** (which gets its name from a town in the Czech Republic).

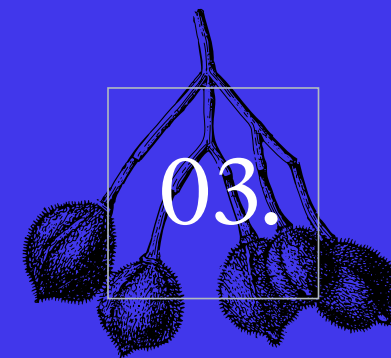
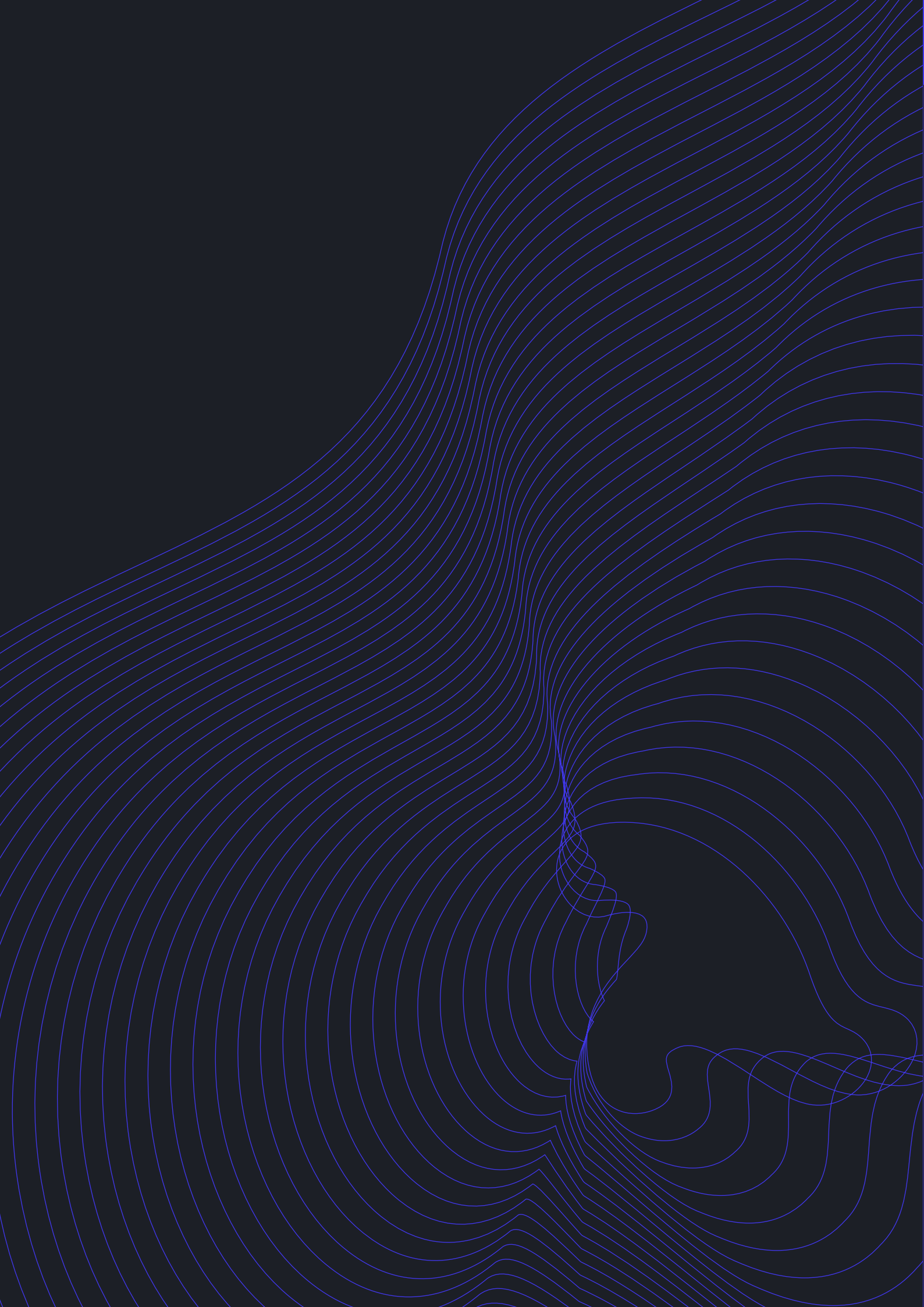
Though you may not even own vinyl or CDs, **Atlantic Records** signed some of the most well-known artists in history (and is an example of a brand name that's not as elastic as one would wish). As with many other types of brand names, Geography-based names don't have to be entirely accurate to a location. But thinking geographically can be a great way to brainstorm.

08. Evocation

A strong brand makes us immediately feel an emotion or think of a particular image. Sometimes, it's simply in the brand name that this type of message transmits. Think about what your product or service can actually do for the customer, how it might make them feel, what problem it's solving. Is there something in your company mission you can associate with? If you look at the big picture, is there an emotional connection to your brand that would be strategically smart to tap into?

Humankind hopes to eliminate single-use plastic, a mission-driven positioning that comes through immediately in the name, while **Frigidaire** instantly makes you believe your food will remain fresh in the perfectly-cold refrigerator. When you want to connect emotionally, Evocation is an excellent archetype to start brainstorming with.





THE BRAND NAMING PROCESS

I ALWAYS THINK OF NAMING AS STRATEGIC, CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING. I NEED TO UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING ABOUT WHAT THIS NAME STANDS FOR, ITS AUDIENCE, AND WHAT THE COMPETITIVE SET IS LIKE. THAT'S THE FIRST LEVEL IN THE PROCESS. IT'S GETTING THAT GROUNDING AND UNDERSTANDING.

— *Susan Manning, Naming Consultant*

Step 1: Don't Think of a Name

A good name is authentic. It represents what the company stands for and what it hopes to achieve. So before you start dreaming up names, your brand strategy has to be fleshed out. That means defining your company's values, the brand's positioning, who your target audience is, and your brand personality.

Why can't you just think of a cool name and retrofit it to be relevant to your company or product?

Defining the key foundational characteristics of the brand and strategic objectives for the name provides firm grounding and understanding to create an authentic, meaningful, and differentiated brand name, which ultimately adds business value.

Crucially, this process also helps bring all of the critical stakeholders in the company together and ensures that everyone is on the same page before you start moving forward. Skipping this critical step can put the whole process in peril.



Step 2: Write a Brief

A common misconception about creativity is that it's not hard work. Creative people are creative, so all they need to do is think for a little bit, and then—*voila!*—a great idea pops into their head, and the process is over.

All creative projects are the result of lots of behind-the-scenes, unglamorous legwork. The brief is one of the first parts of the creative process that create the foundation on which the project ultimately sits.

First, a naming brief should take care of all the housekeeping stuff. What's the overall timing? Who's running the project? Who are the key decision-makers? What are the key dates, the who, what, where, why, when, and how?

Then, the brief should analyze your competition. Who else is in your vertical, and what's their positioning? What differentiates them? What is their strategy, as best you can discern? Look at and analyze their brand names. What naming archetypes are usually used in your space by your competitors? Is there a trend you can or want to latch onto... or one you want to avoid?

Differentiation is critical, which is why after you analyze your competition, you'll want to look inwards. Go into your company history. Why was the company started? What's your brand purpose? What good are you trying to solve in the world? Do the founders have any unique qualities about them? Are they quirky? Are they left-handed? What are some of the associated words or imagery that come to mind when you think about the story behind your company or the history of the founders of the company's history?

And then last but not least, your company strategy. How are you positioned? What's your unique selling proposition? What are some of the words or qualities of your culture or that describe your company? What type of benefits do you provide for your customers? How do you want them to feel when they interact with your brand?

Throughout your brief, you'll want to try and avoid cliché language. Here you want to focus on qualities that are ownable, unique, and specific to your company — and not sound like what everyone else is saying. These words are going to form the genesis for your brainstorming.

Step 3: Brainstorm

Now, the fun begins.

It's time to start throwing ideas out there. Truly, this part of the process is about getting messy, the proverbial throw stuff to the wall and see what sticks.

And you don't want to do this alone, either. You may think you're the creative one, but all of us are only as brilliant as the people we surround ourselves with. Since at this point in the process you want as many ideas as possible, invite all key stakeholders to participate. It doesn't matter if the ideas seem all over the place. In fact, that's a good outcome.

NOTE: It bears repeating that you want all the “key stakeholders” (read: your boss or partner who can approve or kill the final name) to participate. Make everyone part of the process or you risk a swoop-and-poop at the end.

We assume you are not a human dictionary, so to start generating words, employ online tools for word associations. For example, go to thesaurus.com and input some of those unique qualities about your company, founders, or product and you'll get words that have similar meanings. Like a mind-mapping exercise, you can start exploring different ways to express the same idea, or you might notice two or more words that you can combine.

Literature is another excellent resource. From Shakespeare to Word-

sworth, prose, poetry, even non-fiction can be a gold mine of words, references, and inspiration. Anyone who ever read a novel about sailing knows where the DTC apparel company **Mizzen & Main** got their inspiration from.

There are also other resources to research a word's origin, foreign meaning, and more. Try combining words. Try inventing new words. Generate as many ideas as possible, and get everything together on one master list in a central location where everyone can see it.

From there, you want to select the best of the bunch, but still maintain flexibility and a lot of options at this stage. Only discard names that seem totally off-strategy or are a bad fit with other foundational aspects that were determined previously.

Here's some more online resources for word-smithing:

<https://thesaurus.com>

<https://en.wiktionary.org/>

<https://www.wordhippo.com/>

<https://translate.google.com/>

<https://www.morewords.com/>



ONE OF THE BIG PITFALLS IS NAMING BY COMMITTEE. THIS IS A TERRIBLE IDEA THAT USUALLY LEADS TO MILQUETOAST RESULTS. YOU WANT YOUR NAME TO STAND FOR SOMETHING AND NOT BE THE LEAST OBJECTIONABLE NAME THAT EVERYONE WAS WILLING TO AGREE UPON.

— Susan Manning, Naming Consultant

Step 4: Evaluate, get feedback, cut down

There are a few pitfalls or mistakes to watch out for as you evaluate. A big one is not evaluating against the brief that you wrote and the underlying strategy. Someone says, “I just don’t like it.”

This is the biggest mistake you can make.

Your company name has to do one thing: Get the right people to think the right things about your company. If it does that, you have a winner.

So how do you know if people are thinking the right things about your name? Do some research.

You—the founders, CMOs, and employees—are not your ideal prospects. Get feedback from regular people who are outside the organization. This could be potential customers, this could be your friends or other people. Take some of the names that you think have potential, and put each one on a 3 x 5 card, show them around, and ask: “What pops into your head when you read this?” With enough people, you’re going to see a pattern emerge and see a clear winner after a while. Another approach is quantitative or qualitative testing, which can be more expensive but potentially more sound in the conclusion.

Try to avoid any kind of voting process. **Don’t go for the name that everybody agrees on, but nobody is excited about.** Find the ones that are distinctive and stand out. Also, make sure your name is open and elastic enough to stretch with your brand as it grows. Your proposal-writing software might expand to a suite of new business tools and contract management in a few years.

Step 5: Don't get sued

It can often feel like all the good names have been taken. And it can be a real gut punch when you think of a potential name, only to realize that someone else has taken it first.

But when this happens—as it almost always does—don't despair. The more you learn about trademarking, the more you'll know that things aren't always as they seem.

By digging a little deeper, you may realize that the company or product is a bit outdated. Maybe they went out of business. Perhaps the trademark has expired, and you have a shot at it.

Or, after many coffee-powered brainstorming sessions, the cleverest, most dynamite name pops into your head. You whip out your phone and do a quick search to find no meaningful results. You apply for a trademark only to see that someone is sitting on it... or perhaps worse, the limbo of "Pending."

Thankfully, there's an easy-to-use, intuitive*, seamless resource out there for you to search for and apply for trademarks for your business.

It even has a really nice name of its own: TESS.

Wait... what the heck is TESS?

TESS is an acronym (naming archetype alert!) that stands for the Trademark Electronic Search System of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. It is the place you should go before applying for a trademark to ensure that there are no existing and pending trademarks in the United States that interfere with the one you're hoping to get. TESS allows you to see any trademarks that have been registered or applied for that are 1) similar to yours, 2) used on related products or services, or 3) live and in use.

The good news is that your trademark will need to be flagged for all three of those designations before it's prevented from being registered, based on a likelihood of confusion.

Let's step back for a moment. What is a trademark, and why do I need a trademark for my business?

The USPTO says: "A trademark or service mark includes any word, name, symbol, device, or any combination, used or intended to be used to identify and distinguish the goods/services of one seller or provider from those of others, and to indicate the source of the goods/services."

A trademark is essentially your brand name. Filing for a trademark

The screenshot shows the USPTO TESS interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like Home, Site Index, Search, FAQ, Glossary, Contacts, eBusiness, eBiz alerts, and News. Below this, the title "Trademarks > Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS)" is displayed. A timestamp indicates the system was last updated on Sun Jul 11 03:17:22 EDT 2021. A secondary navigation bar includes links for TESS HOME, STRUCTURED, FREE FORM, BROWSE DICT, SEARCH OG, BOTTOM, and HELP. A prominent warning message states: "WARNING: AFTER SEARCHING THE USPTO DATABASE, EVEN IF YOU THINK THE RESULTS ARE 'O.K.,' DO NOT ASSUME THAT YOUR MARK CAN BE REGISTERED AT THE USPTO. AFTER YOU FILE AN APPLICATION, THE USPTO MUST DO ITS OWN SEARCH AND OTHER REVIEW, AND MIGHT REFUSE TO REGISTER YOUR MARK." Below the warning, there's a "View Search History" dropdown menu. Search filters include radio buttons for "Plural and Singular" (selected), "Singular", "Live and Dead" (selected), "Live", and "Dead". The "Search Term:" field is empty. The "Field:" dropdown is set to "Combined Word Mark (BI,TI,MP,TL)". The "Result Must Contain:" dropdown is set to "All Search Terms (AND)". There are buttons for "Submit Query", "Clear Query", and "Logout". A note at the bottom says "Please logout when you are done to release system resources allocated for you."

* With an interface this intuitive, what could possibly go wrong? 🤖

protects your business from confusion and competition from other companies or products.

However, not every single business may feel they need to trademark their name. A small, local company could possibly get by without a trademark. If another local business tries using your name, or something very similar, you can be protected by common law. And if another small, local business across the country uses your name, it probably won't create any problems.

Hence, Frank's Deli in Council Bluffs, Iowa is not taking any business from or hurting the Frank's Deli in Park Slope, Brooklyn (although their pastrami is cheaper).

Trademarks, however, are valuable for businesses that are hoping to grow into state- or nation-wide recognizability (like most startups). Applying for and receiving approval for your trademark puts your trademark in the USPTO database, meaning you have the rights to your company or product name, with nationwide protection.

This designation offers you legal protection should you need it at any time. (And you also get to put that cool little ® or ™ next to your name or logo, making you look legit.)

The TESS site can be a little difficult to navigate, but thankfully we've created a separate guide to help with that.

We know you're not a lawyer (more on that in a bit), and that trademarking can often feel a little in-the-weeds. So here are our key points to remember on trademarks.

1. **Understand what you can and can't trademark.** Think of a unique name. You usually can't trademark a generic, often used word as the name of your company or product... that is, until it becomes big enough where it becomes synonymous with your brand or product (think Apple).

2. **Familiarize yourself with the USPTO site and TESS.** Do some sample searches with companies you're familiar with. You'll be amazed at how many trademarks they have to apply for. Once you get the hang of it, dare we say TESS can be a bit of fun.

3. **When you think you have a potential name you like,** conduct a search in TESS. You don't want to start envisioning your branding with a name that you eventually won't be able to use.

4. **Consider hiring a trademark attorney.** If you can afford one, they'll significantly increase your chances of having your trademark application approved. You can always feel free to apply by yourself as well.

Final thought: if your business intends to serve international markets, you may want to consider a linguistics check. A linguistics check is a specialized service that considers what your name may mean, sound, and imply in other cultures. That way, the new name that you love won't mean "he farted" in Sweedish, which, as you know, can sink you faster than a torpedo amidsthips.



Successful names have all three qualities

Step 6: Summon the courage... and decide!

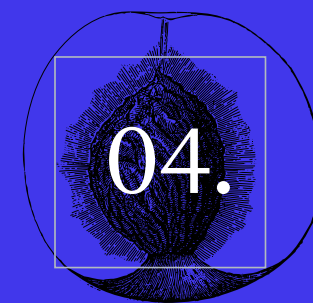
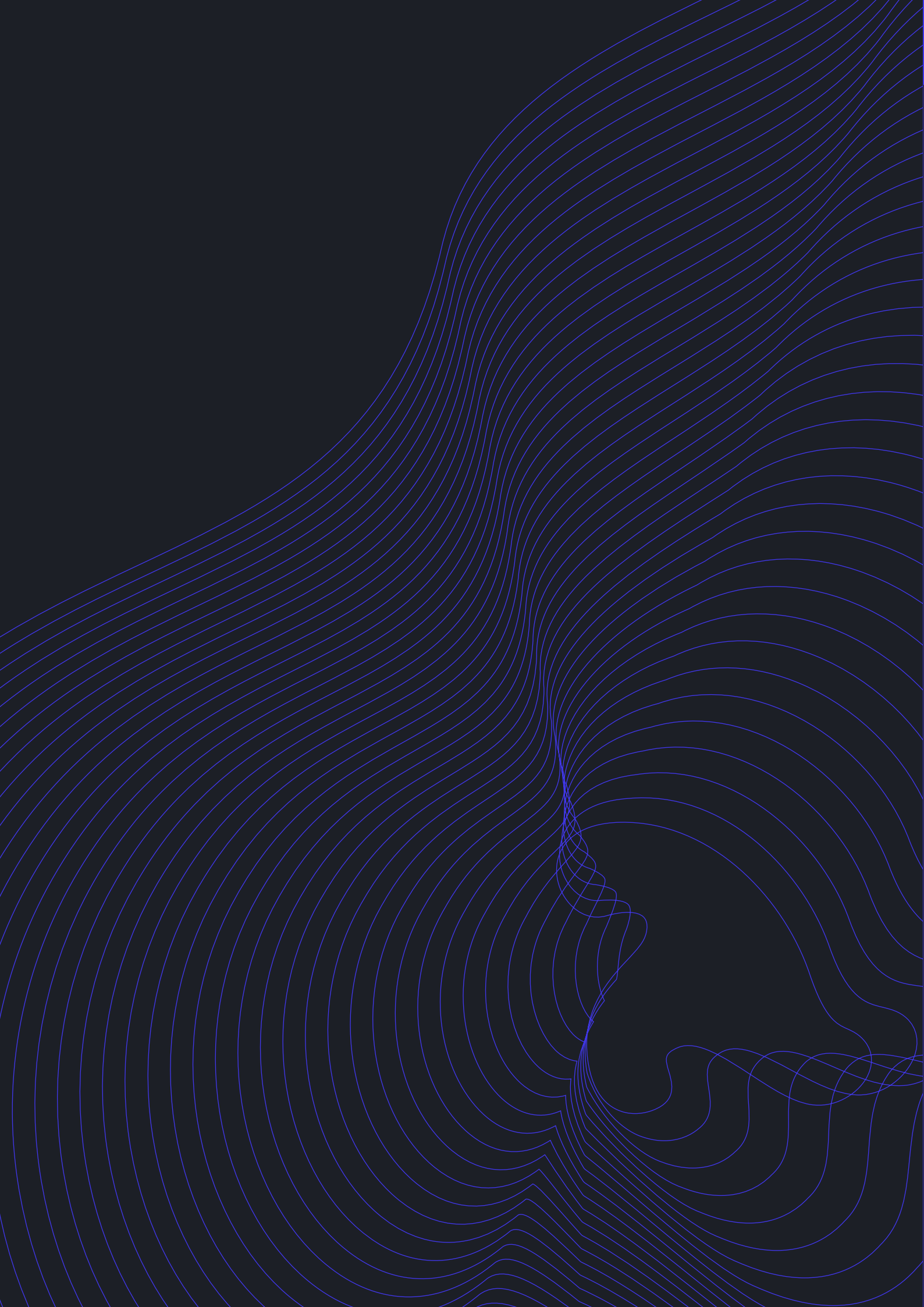
We know how difficult and stressful choosing a name is. It's a crucial part of your brand. But of all the steps, this is the one that we encourage the most to take your time with.

"It's essential to spend time with the names after they're presented," brand naming expert Susan Manning says. "I encourage my clients always to spend a few days going up and down the list of the names, all of them, and to think about what names really resonate. What ones do they remember?"

Most often, it's not love at first sight, so give it time.

When you consider each name, it's important to go as deep as you possibly can. Even sketching out some low-fi visuals with possible names can help, as visualization can make it feel "real". Your gut response in those moments can tell you a lot about how a name will be received and what emotional response it will engender.

In the end, the best name is the one that fulfills the strategic brief you wrote, is cleared for trademarking, fits your personality, and feels distinctive. If your new brand name can do all that, you have a winner. Congratulations!



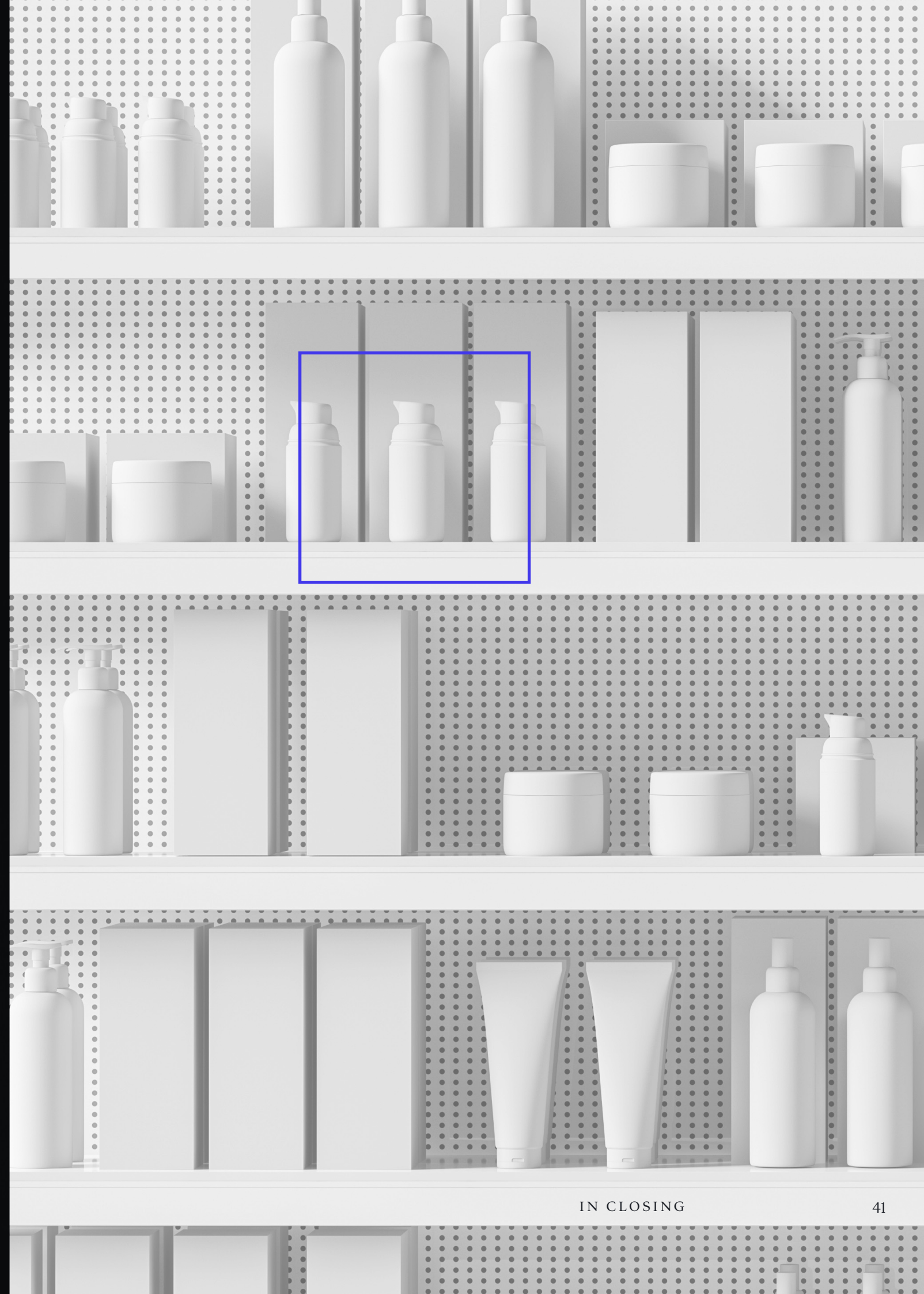
IN CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Think about the brand names that you like. Why do you like them? The answer will be different for everyone. Maybe you like cool names, names that play around with words, names that are short, names that are long, names that combine two seemingly different words.

Whatever it is, you probably like a brand name because of two main reasons. First, the name makes you feel something. And second, the name is likely one for a successful brand because what represents brand success creates an emotional connection with the consumer. You want your name to do that too, and you can ensure that happens as long as you find a name built on a solid brand foundation and strategy.

In the end, you want a name that you and your customers will live with for a very long time. And that takes courage.





About C42D:

C42D is a New York branding agency founded in 2010. We're on a mission to help launch companies that are solving impossible problems, inventing the future, or improving people's lives around the world. A lofty goal for sure—but it all starts with a single step. Perhaps you'll join us for the journey.

Together with our clients, we develop strategies and create marketing that performs and builds lasting equity. To do this, C42D finds the magic overlap where brand and behavior come together, where data informs emotion, and where heart and mind meet purpose.

The result are brands customers love.

Stronger brand, stronger ROI. This simple equation drives all our thinking and creativity.

About the author:

David Card founded C42D, one of NYC's premier branding agencies, in 2010. Starting as a solo freelancer and ignoring the recession, he built C42D from the ground up with plenty of stumbles and opportunities along the way. When not branding unicorns or being a dad, you can catch him playing guitar, eating a taco, reading, or mentoring future design prodigies.

Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to *Merriam's Guide to Naming* By Lisa D. Merriam which provided much inspiration, especially around archetypes. Many kudos to Susan Manning, who's teamed up with C42D several times and is an invaluable resource on naming. And, finally, hats off to Christina Papale for teaching us the finer points of trademarking and the power of a well-written brief.

