LarsMeyer

strategic design

The need for a powerful name

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A great name differentiates itself from competitors, to make an emotional connection its audience, and helps to build a brand that fires the passions of its customers.

A powerful name is the result of a powerful positioning strategy that finds a fresh way into your customers' hearts and minds, in order to redefine and own the conversation in your industry, by engaging people on as many levels as possible.

The process

We create powerful names that will captivate and engage your audience.

This is how we will do it for you.

Step 1: Who are you?
Step 2: The Competition



Step 3: Positioning

Milestone:
the Creative Brief

The Creative Brief

The Assignment is to create a name for a new company in the telecommunications field. The brief for this project is by nature necessarily vague as the client is still considering different opportunities within the market space. The New Company is similar to a former business started by the client:

. . . a provider of small business and enterprise telecommunications, hosted PBX services, and unified messaging. The Company has built Best-in-Class technologies along with streamlined business processes and solid ethical standards that ensure every customer receives exactly the services they require. The Company will meet or exceed expectations with our affordable custom telecommunications solutions for business.

The client is considering broadening beyond the enterprise level customers typically preferred by his former company, to small business and consumer products. There is also the possibility of expanding into a retail operation with stores in regional shopping malls.

The naming implications of these different approaches is significant.
The creative team has therefore decided to generate names that will satisfy a broad range of applications, in other words: enterptise B2B, small business, consumer home and consumenr retail.



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Step 4: Name Development

Names are created using brainstorming and free association techniques. Physical and internet based resources are referenced for inspiration. The resulting created names are sorted into four types:
See Appendix 1 for more information

Descriptive
Invented
Experiential
Evocative

Step 4: Name Development

Over 700 names were generated in the creative sessions for this project. .



Step 4: Name Development

After an initial review a list of
103 names were selected to proceed



The top 103 are included in Appendix 1 to this document

Step 5: Filtration

The names are transcribed to a spread-sheet where each name is rated on a scale of 1 to 9, according to six different criteria. The filtration is done individually by each member of the team to ensure unique opinions.

Three evaluators were hired for this project.

- Distinctiveness
- Brevity
- Appropriateness
- Easy Spelling & Pronunciation
- Likability
- Extendability



Step 5: Filtration

The results are combined and the names are sorted according to a ranking based on the highest aggregate score.

The top 20 names are selected to proceed.

Step 6: Trademark Prescreen

The 20 strongest candidates were screened to ensure that your company would be able to trademark and use whichever one was ultimately going to be chosen.

There are several levels of trademark screening: this first level allows us to eliminate obvious conflicts and to continue the process without undue loss of time.

Due to the highly populated competitive landscape there are literally thousands of players, though few rank as serious competitors. Some names are in use by multiple marginal players, resulting in no one "owning the name" and therefore may be ready for purchase or simply to capture the brand position.

Name alternatives are explored

Milestone: Short List

The names that successfully passed through this process formed our first 'short list' of 20 choices.

Big Sky

As a metaphor the sky is seen as the highest level of achievement, it is the unknown extending down to the human domain, it is the frontier of endless possibilities.

The sky is familiar, a constant companion and landmark, ever changing but always present no matter where we go.

Big Sky has an honest, and innocent wonder implicit in the name, a subtle tension. The addition of the adjective "big" is in essence redundant, as there is only one sky and it is by it's very definition big. This redundancy adds a whimsical notion to the name on first glance, though on a deeper level it introduces a metaphysical twist. The qualifier "big", adds an implicit absurd notion that there is a different sky altogether, one that is better.

"Big Sky is bigger than anything you know."

As a name for a company Big Sky implies ubiquitous-ness, which has direct implications for connectivity and the Internet, especially in an increasingly cloud computing based environment of universal access.

Big Sky has broad general appeal that is evocative of a mode of interaction, or a way of being, without focusing on a particular product category. The result is a name that can anchor a brand that scores highly for extensibility.

Sonati

A distinct European/Italian flair, which lends a sophistication to the name. The root of the word comes from the Italian word, meaning to sound. The usage in music was originally to indicate music played on an instrument as opposed to being sung. By the 1800's the usage broadened to be applied to a form of large scale musical arrangement.

Sonati is a play on the word, making it sound as if it is said in the plural, (although the correct plural form is sonate). Regardless the faux plural form adds abundance to a word already rich in resonance, literally.

A company that is in the business of providing communications solutions will be regarded well with a name like Sonati, the direct meaning to make sound, and the extended meaning a complex beautiful arrangement of instrumentation.

Big Talk

Big Talk is about big ideas, with a warning that if you talk big you have better be able to follow through. Big Talk communications has what it takes to deliver.

Big Talk exudes confidence, and with confidence comes power, and a definite cockiness.

Big Talk has edge. It is contemporary without being fleeting or purely in the moment.

Applied to a communications company Big Talk refers to bandwidth, volume of traffic, size, and capability.

Big talk has a folksy honesty, ideal for a consumer facing brand. Replete with humour and a sardonic self-awareness, Big Talk is easily understood as a boldly promise to deliver.

Ipid

Ipid is an invented word with an intentional geek chic twist. The parts of the word are IP –internet protocol, and ID – identity, as in me/myself.

IPID is a brash and presumptuous replacement to the notion of the phone number, which is increasingly becoming redundant as mobile, and internet driven solutions become increasingly dominant.

e.g. "Hey Jim,I will get back to you later, what is your IPID?"

Intended as a bold consumer facing brand it will also translate well in a business to business environment.

IPID is a place where people who love technology converge.

BigMouth

Lots of things to say.

A cheeky self confident moniker, usually meant in a derisive or critical manner when applied to others, when applied to oneself it is regarded as self effacing, yet self assured. To be regarded as big mouthed, is to be loud or talkative, often meant in an indiscreet manner, which can be twisted to mean that the bigmouthed one has nothing to hide, an honest, brash openness.

Big Mouth Communications has youth appeal. It is irreverent and open for business. It speaks to value, lots of talk time for those with lots to say. It is the answer for those that are plagued by high cost of talk minutes on other carriers.

This is the solution for your Big Mouth. Bring it on!

Argo

From mythology, the Argo was the ship sailed by Jason and the Argonauts, on the voyage to find the Golden Fleece. It was a a heroic voyage, protected by the gods.

Argo is a B2B brand with a strong resounding presence. Iconic imagery paired with strong sounds, in a short, memorable, easy to spell and pronounce name.

Argo Communications.

Argo Solutions

Coda

The meaning of coda is the conclusion of a statement… the final word. The definitive summation of a claim.

It also reminds of codex, and early manuscript or book, Original volumes of knowledge, best known examples are the codex of Leonardo Da Vinci, which have sold for millions of dollars to collectors. The Word also evokes the word code, with wide ranging meanings from sets of rules– the basis for laws, to systems for converting information from one form to another, to the essential instruction sets interpreted by computers to do their tasks.

Full on associations and meanings Coda, resonates with authority and accountability. Suitable for both B2B and B2C applications, the word has internal strength, a single syllable with a hard C/K sound, and a definitive and grounding finish.

Oyster

Oyster is fun.

Oyster is a lighthearted surreal name that comes right out of left field. An oyster is associated with toughness and preciousness (see Rolex Oyster), it is the thing that conceals a mysterious treasure, the pearl in the oyster, It is also associated with love, and as an aphrodisiac, while being "a little gross and slimy".

This bizarre and innocuous juxtaposition lends fun and intrigue to the brand. It allows for a bright and life affirming brand that does not take life too seriously.

Oyster: sensual delights, love, anticipation, wealth, treasure. . . . And silliness.

Alternative treatment: Oy!ster

Modus

The word modus is the nominative form of mode: meaning the value occurring most frequently in a distribution. The association is that Modus Communications is the de facto standard.

Further the word mode also means a particular means of accomplishing something. Modus Communications: it is the way that it is done.

Modus is characterized by full, well rounded sounds.

Leap

The word Leap instantly conjures up a dynamic vision of someone or something jumping and achieving greatness – it's athleticism is inherent in the name.

Leap features in numerous figures of speech: Leap of Logic, Leap of Faith, and so on, which have an common need for an assumed faith in one's choice, that the reward will result from an action undertaken as a deliberate choice sometimes in the face of other challenges. The Leap will result in a different outcome, different position, going further or reaching higher. It is replete with positive aspirational qualities.

Activ8

Activ8 is a unique contemporary spin on the word activate.

There is obvious action within this name and it promises a dynamic environment – which is seductive in its immanence. When you activate something there is something that is about to happen –promise of change.

Activate also feels very scientific or maybe technological – it pertains to the activation of a molecular or cell structure which feels right for a cellular product type.

Activate: To render more reactive; excite: to activate a molecule.

AirTalk

This word has two delicious meanings – first off from a consumer perspective we could be talking 'on air' as in on the radio – but then amusingly it could refer to the person talking as talking air. But most of all it directly references the "airtime minutes" that the company is selling. It also opens up possibilities for tapping into other communications products related to the notion of broadcasting or one-to-many and many-to-many models, e.g. seminar and conferencing.

Air Talk is not a made-up name but it is definitely evocative of a dramatic situation or circumstance – the 'on air' feel is very engaging and seductive.

SkyPlan

As with Air Talk Sky plan definitely appeals to the 'in the cloud' transference of air-time minutes. Sky is also a great word to describe size and reach – like an airline name SkyPlan delivers an exotic nature to the concept and evokes a very solid attention to planning and logistics.

The word plan is intricately associated with communications products as it is, and hence has consumer and business strength in it's directness. The name is not trying to skirt the issue at hand: we compete in a defined product category, with defined expectations and performance criteria… we have the plan for you.

GoCall

This word is evocative of the 'in crowd'. It feels very urban and very city. The 'It Girl' uses Go Call as their carrier/provider. It's very modernist and cool – but also feels neat and efficient.

A very designer term – Go Call is the name associated with architects, fashion designers and the media. It feels like those in the know have been using it forever but we have just been given access to it (which is probably true to a certain extent).

Go call is very motion and action focused – it feels like the user is happening and going places.

Big Drum

Big Drum has a beautiful and primal communication resonance. Drums are regarded as the first mode of long distance communication.

It immediately appeals to any demographic and instantly represents communication at its most elemental form.

Big Drum is also a metaphor for advertising with it's "bang the drum" concept.

However one looks at 'Big Drum' it is a concept with a powerful message that will communicate over distance in a pure and elemental form. Nobody, from a small child to an elderly gentleman will fail to understand its significance.

Resona

'Resona' is another invented name, which immediately evokes music and rhythm. The obvious connection to the word resonate allows us to easily recognize its value across boundaries and continents – so it has a big feel. But perhaps because of it's resonance or association with music and rhythm it stops short of being bulky or unwieldy and feels immediately familiar with any audience.

'Resona' is a friendly presence and a welcome ally and resource in a very large and enterprising environment. It has a strong international undertone in that the vowel sound combination has consistency across a variety languages, including International, UK and American English.

Purvox

'Purvox' is a simple spin of the concept of pure voice.

Vox – Latin for Voice is described by the word pure. This could mean that the company's communication is pure – or that the service offering is simple and easy to understand.

PURVOX means that the quality of the signal is pure, or perhaps even excellent.

Purvox has a resounding nature to it and evokes audio quality at the highest level – it also denotes a purity of voice, ... not such a bad thing when discussing phone minutes.

The rhyme with the word box adds tangibility to the word. Promoting the idea of commodification either as a product or as a service.

Fee Fi Fon

or, Fee Fi Phone

This name is intended as a fun reference to childhood. It is based on "Fee-fi-fo-fum" the first line of a historical rhyme made famous in the English fairy tale Jack and the Beanstalk. The rhyme is uttered by the Giant who vows that he will crush Jack. Jack steals gold coins, the hen which laid golden eggs and a magic harp from the Giant; kills the giant and lives happily ever after.

The story resonates with a David and Goliath scenario, the smaller underdog "hero" stealing things away from the big giants. In the telecom world this is a familiar scenario, and the name Fee Fi Fon underscores the heroic nature of the company.

Classic! Fun and cheeky.

Constellation

Constellation is a pattern comprised of a multitude of stars making an image of powerful mythical figure. The constellation is a part of the zodiac itself thought to be powerful beyond measure.

As a metaphor the constellation is used to indicate an ordered arrangement of things joined together physically or logically. For our purposes the metaphor is even better as the points (clients/users) are the stars, and the arrangement or lines are a network joining them together, making them beautiful and powerful, in short giving them meaning.

The name Constellation is dignified and classical.

Big Pipe

"Bandwith is King. We got, you want it, keep talking"

Another BIG name. Big Pipe has a surfer cool about it, with cybernetic overtones. The name makes no pretence about trying to be cool. It just is cool.

Irreverent, contemporary, hip.

Consumer appeal with a youthful driver.

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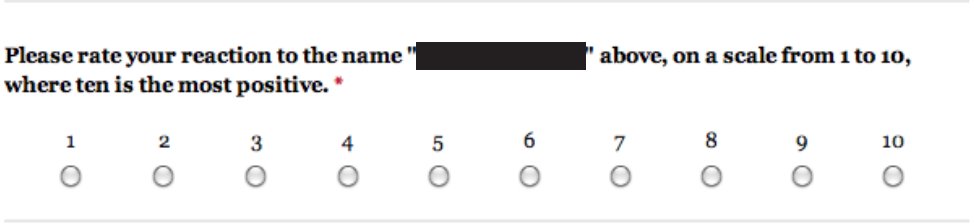
Step 7:
Creative perspective

The Client selections are advanced to development of creative materials to put potential names in a meaningful context.

The materials will include renderings of the names with colour and typography and applied to business collateral items, sales booths and web pages to express the impact of the name.

Milestone: Name Selection

The moment of decision:
The working group voted on their final choices,
with input from the Professional Services team



Step 8: Identity Development TBA

Now that the name is established, begin can begin defining a graphical language to suit it. We craft a series of visual concepts for review by the working group.

After an interim informal review stage two or three ideas will progress to a more finished stage of visual development where a more formal presentation of the final concepts will take place for a final decision.

The Creative Team

Lars Meyer

Lars is a creative leader, who has worked extensively in the convergence areas between design, advertising, corporate communications and education. As a multidisciplinary designer he has lead teams in traditional and interactive media through print and display advertising, the web, mobile devices, location based systems, exhibits and installations.

As a key client liaison and producer, Lars' experience spans the range from working relationships with senior management in Fortune 500 companies, industry associations, government, nonprofit organizations and small business. He has extensive experience in working across cultures, to identify opportunities and solve problems through vision creation, concept development, team formation, specification and implementation. His work is shaped by highly creative approach to problem solving and design, and his ability to establish rapport with stakeholders and motivating a team around a shared vision.

Dougal Muir

Dougal is a creative director with over sixteen years in interactive agency experience. His unique talent for understanding precisely how to translate difficult concepts into powerful, seductive messages and passion for exquisite delivery of design, has gained him a reputation for building inspiring and functional solutions. Together with a pool of highly regarded industry specialists, he has designed powerful communication tools including simple and unique graphical identities, compelling interactive online experiences, impressive print and event materials and stunning and dramatic motion graphics pieces for many influential organizations.

Dougal uses design to help organizations communicate what it is about them that makes them who they are, and in doing so helps to generate a positive impact on their business success. He is motivated by the idea that design is a tool for positive change and that by partnering with forward thinking organizations real and practical benefits will occur for end users. Dougal holds a BA (Hons) degree from the London College of Printing and currently lives in Vancouver, British Columbia where his practice is located.

Suzanne Geba

Suzanne is a both business research librarian and a part of the creative team. Creatively she contributes meaningfully in the naming process itself, while also providing the in-depth research materials that are needed to inform the creative process in terms of competitive intelligence, filtration and legal prescreen

Suzanne holds a Master of Library and Information Science degree from the university of Western Ontario.

Appendix 1: Name Development Categories

Descriptive

Descriptive names either relate directly to or describe a business's service, product, or approach, or consist of peoples' names. Examples include General Motors, Major League Baseball.

Pro: Descriptive names tell the audience clearly who you are or what you do.

Con: In any particular line of business, the number of relevant descriptive words is limited. Descriptive names can be easily repeated—often resulting in a name that is barely distinguishable from those of your competitors. Names that describe what you do also can lack flexibility—they no longer apply, and can even cause confusion, if you start doing something else.

Invented

Invented names can include non-English derivatives such as Greek or Latin roots or be created on the basis of their rhythm, sound and/or appearance in print. Examples: diageo, accenture, Oreo, Vonage, Viagra.

Pro: Invented names can be memorable and engaging, are generally easy to trade- mark and are usually free of negative connotations when first chosen. Oreo and Viagra, for different reasons, are good examples of this.

Con: Invented names can be image-free and emotionally void or intrinsically meaningless and so, if ill chosen, resistant to the attachment of your message. In such cases they may appear to have no connection to the company or product to which they are attached. Unless you implement an extensive marketing and advertising plan to give meaning to your invented name, it may be difficult to create a well-recognized brand. An uninformed consumers will always ask, "What does Terrasen do?"

Experiential

Experiential names offer a direct connection to the audience's experience rather than to what the company/product does. Examples: Ford Explorer, Silk, True Value.

Pro: This type of name generally makes sense to the consumer as applied to a product or company—for example, Ford Explorer suggests an adventure every time you get into your SUV, Silk is s(oy m)ilk and it's silky, True Value hardware is priced right—and helps the consumer relate directly to the company or product.

Con: Differentiation can be a problem. Because these names can be so obvious, they can be overused. They may even be used across several industries. (e.g. Netscape Navigator/Lincoln Navigator/Nokia Navigator/Google Navigator)

Evocative

Successful evocative names encapsulate, without actually describing, the essence of a company or product — in other words, its positioning. These names are truly unique, and when they work, they can be very powerful indeed. Examples: Apple, Yahoo, Volkswagen Beetle.

Pro: This type of name is dissimilar to other names, making it a powerful differentiator. It can work on many different levels, engage your audience in many different ways, and it can be "bigger" than the goods and services for which it is initially coined. Because of its distinctiveness, trademarking can be easier than average. When an evocative name is in sync with your positioning, it is a branding force that can dominate an industry.

Con: If it doesn't fit with your positioning, an evocative name can be a disaster. Even if it does fit, naysayers may find holes in it during the decision making process.

Appendix 2

Oyster	Evocative
MODUS	Invented
ACTIV8	Invented
Leap	Evocative
Big Mouth	Evocative
ARGO	Invented
KODA	Invented
IPID	Invented
Bigtalk	Evocative
Big Sky	Evocative
Airtalk	Evocative
SkyPlan	Evocative
Sonati	Invented
VOXBOX	Invented
Go Call	Functional/Descriptive
Rubicon	Invented
RESONA	Invented
PURVOX	Invented
Big Drum	Evocative
Fat Pipe	Evocative
Traffix	Functional/Descriptive
Activnet	Invented
Big Pipe	Evocative
Constellation	Evocative
EOS	Invented
Zoovox	Invented
Fee Fi Fon	Evocative
sonovox	Invented
AURORA	Invented
UpStream	Evocative
Bubble	Evocative
Datashift	Evocative
TalkStream	Evocative
Starfish	Evocative
FONICA	Invented
Vox Stream	Invented
Big Bubble	Evocative
Metrocall	Evocative
VOXIS	Invented
Spheris	Invented
Big Plan	Evocative
TRAFIX	Invented
VOX POD	Invented
TELEVOX	Invented
Fon Plus	Experiential
VOXEL	Invented
BIG PLAN.IT	Invented
Good Call	Experiential
Telezone	Functional/Descriptive
FONPLUS	Invented
AIR LOOM	Invented
BIG FON	Functional/Descriptive
VOLIA	Invented
Libretto	Evocative
Volaria	Invented
PurNet	Evocative
VOXPAC	Invented
Superskyway	Evocative
Zip Tel	Evocative
Voxport	Evocative
Primox	Invented
Show Stream	Evocative
TELIUM	Invented
Helium	Evocative
Vox Port	Invented
FONETIK	Invented
BIG BLUE VOX	Invented
Aeolus	Invented
DIAL "0" Zero	Functional/Descriptive
ZipBee	Evocative
Intellia	Invented
PHONIA	Invented
NEXION	Invented
Big Plan.IT	Evocative
Phone Plus	Functional/Descriptive
GO-V0X	Invented
Nu Connect	Functional/Descriptive
Echo	Evocative
Intelligia	Invented
Tel Shift	Evocative
Talk Line	Functional/Descriptive
TEL ALLIANCE	Functional/Descriptive
TELEZONE	Invented
discover Tel	Functional/Descriptive
POK.IT	Invented
ZIPTEL	Invented
Nu Stream	Evocative
Prefix	Evocative
Dial "0"	Evocative
Spinner	Evocative
Think Big	Evocative
2 Fon	Evocative
Call Station	Functional/Descriptive
VOX FLO	Invented
Talk Fon	Functional/Descriptive
Bigger	Evocative
NUCONNECT	Invented
NU STREAM	Invented
BeeTel	Evocative
2 Tel	Evocative
TALKPHON	Invented
Go Big Network	Evocative
FON PLEX	Invented
NUNTIO	Invented
VoxStream	Evocative
VOXSPOT	Invented
VIAVOX	Invented
Loom	Evocative
Phone Plus	Experiential
Big Fon	Evocative
VOX SERV	Invented
Race Time	Evocative
Discover Tel	Evocative
Vox Serve	Evocative