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There's so much in a name. An evocative and compelling name is the first step toward creating a brand around a product, especially if it establishes positive connections in customers' minds whenever they hear it. But how does an enterprising inventor or company with a new product find the best moniker for taking their invention to market?

When trying to pick out a name for a new product, some inventors or businesses may consult with a branding or name specialist firm, though these professionals can charge tens of thousands of dollars for their services. Despite the cost, these experts may save you a significant amount of time, considering the large number of options they generate.

"Professional naming firms start out with a raw base of 800 to 1,000 names and work from there,"

If hiring a professional is out of the question or beyond your budget, there are a few steps you can take to ease the process and avoid common — or even embarrassing — mistakes. Here's a round-up of some leading tips on naming your product:

Don't be a "repeat" offender First and foremost, make your name count and avoid infringement by doing some investigating. While the first name you come up with might sound perfect, it may already be trademarked.

trademark and branding application process. Their website also lets users search by name and subcategory, and lists whether a particular name is already taken.

In trademarking a brand name, it can also be useful to consult with an attorney to avoid potential legal problems.

"...[Y]ou can ask your lawyer to provide a memo or letter stating whether in his opinion the mark is 'confusingly similar,' the legal criteria for deciding if infringement has occurred or if not," marketing blog explains. A drafted letter avoids negligence on your part, according to the site.

keep in mind that trademarking your name will also prevent your concept from being stolen.

Be Creative, But Get to the Point An effective name will accurately describe what your product does and should be catchy, clear and succinct. You will also want to leave an impression with your audience without causing confusion about what the product does. Some developers use a play on words or alternate spellings, i.e., "Xtra," while others may choose to go the double-entendre route, or use a combination of the two, such as "Flixx."

Get started with a thesaurus, and build from there. "Use linguistic devices such as rhyme, alliteration and vowel harmony,"

Get Vocal The naming process should go beyond paper proposals. While a name may seem catchy in print, it can evoke a different emotion when spoken. "Read each name aloud, paying special attention to the way it sounds if you foresee radio advertising or telemarketing in your future."

Also consider the overall feeling that the name evokes when it's repeated. "If the words are descriptive, use words that elicit a positive image or response."

This may explain why so many products are named using positive words such as "smart," "energy" and variations of "new." Finally, keep in mind that while a pun may seem creative, it might not translate well when spoken out loud.

Avoid Unintentionally Insulting the Public Seemingly great names can get lost in translation, which poses a problem when pitching your product on the international market. It's essential that your name does not translate into slang or words that have a negative meaning in other languages, a common faux-pas that even large companies have failed to avoid.

For instance, a Ford car model from the 70s, the "Ford Fiera," is actually translated to "Ford Deformed" or "Ford Ugly" in Spanish. Several other bad naming mistakes, such as naming products after weapons or sharp objects, like "razor," "blade" or "edge."

Know Your Audience and Consult Them One of the best ways to get efficient name feedback is to know your intended audience and ask them what they think. "Other people will notice gems that you ignored, and duds that you're attached to for your own idiosyncratic reasons."

Finding prospective consultants can be as simple as contacting friends and associates or searching online social networks for feedback.

"I give the group printed brand names, one at a time, and then I ask them to read it aloud. They get visual, tactile and auditory impressions of the name."

While a name can affect the perception of an invention, remember that the product itself may trump even the worst names. Ironically, some of the most innovative and popular products — such as Apple's iPad have been widely criticized for having an awkward name.