A strategic and co-creative approach to naming

A purposeful and appropriate name

Our experience and methodology leads to a powerful name, a name that expresses the purpose and identity of your brand or organization.
A strategic approach will ensure that the name fulfills the agreed criteria and a process will be put in place to facilitate decision making with all stakeholders.

Employee Engagement

A good name is a motivator for your employees. By involving them in the process, the new name will be positively received and people will carry the new name in their hearts.
A new name creates momentum, brings new energy and is a perfect opportunity to tell the story of the organization and engage employees and stakeholders in a dialogue.

A name is a metaphor for the purpose of the organization

Words create worlds. How we speak determines the reality that we are building and our outlook on the future. A name is a powerful expression and communication tool.
That's why we think it is worthwhile taking some time agreeing on a naming process upfront.

We usually work with a strategic project team and **define the identity** of the new concept during the **Business Why-How-What** development.
What is the underlying vision of the future, what is the mission and ambition of this organization or brand? Who are the target buyers and stakeholders and what are the benefits for them. What ultimately will be the added value and brand promise for the different stakeholders?
But there is more to a name than only semantics or meaning. Since we use our whole brain - the so called Left and Right hemispheres - when we perceive and experience brands, it is necessary to define also the **intuitive, emotional side of the brand and the feeling and impression we want to obtain in the hearts of customers and stakeholders**. In the positioning workshop we explore the expected brand personality and tonality using Visual Thinking methods and creative techniques.
This total picture (strategic & intuitive) helps us to define a unique and relevant profile for the new brand and a shared image of what the new name has to express.

The name scorecard –
the criteria for creation and decision-making

Which meanings and associations do we want to express in the name? What story do we want it to tell?
We define these parameters in the Name scorecard, which include the following elements:
– **Associations**: Which semantic associations, meaning, should the name express? (E.g. connecting)
– **Character**: Which characteristics and personality traits should the name evoke? (E.g. expert, respectful, challenging, ...).

- **Sound/Form**: How should the name sound? (E.g. accessible - specialist, hard-soft, ...) and how long/short may the name be?
- **Taxonomy**: Do we want a descriptive (Telenet), evocative (Orange) or abstract name (Yahoo)?
- **Brand architecture**: How does the name relate to corporate or sub brands?
- **Conditions**: The name should be easy to pronounce and have no negative meanings in which languages? Which domain names should be available? In which countries should the name be used and registered?

This name scorecard is agreed by the strategic project team and used throughout the process as a briefing tool for the name creation and a checklist for the final selection of the name.

Name Co-creation session

A participative or "Co-creative" process is a very powerful way to involve different stakeholders in finding the new name; it **guarantees shared ownership**.
This definition of the added value is the basis for the semantic themes that are explored in the later name generation.

This is why we set up a "creative project team" with the client. If we choose for a co-creative approach, we involve a lot of people; the strategic project team and a wide representation of people in the company, or even other stakeholders, … people who have a strong affinity with the organization or the reference market and target groups. External creatives can enhance the flow of creation and bring a fresh perspective to the namestorm. We have facilitated Namestorms with up to 40 participants!

In the co-creative session with the creative project team, **we will create hundreds of names**. It includes phases of exploration & generation (diverging) in which quantity and creativity are key. As many names as possible are generated based on a variety of positioning routes and semantic fields (areas of "content" which we are exploring). We explore different linguistic backgrounds, languages, verbal styles, symbolism and mythology.
In this session we also start making a selection of favorite names (converging). We immediately check availability of domain names. At the end of the Namestorm we come to a shortlist of 5-10 favorite names that are an expression of different positioning routes.

Research

The selected names are investigated on negative meanings in several relevant languages and undesired websites. The availability of the required domain names is confirmed.
In this phase we possibly undertake a qualitative or quantitative research among employees, target groups and/or stakeholders. We investigate what associations come up with the name and which names best fit the desired positioning.

Decision on final shortlist

We advise the strategic project team on a final shortlist - based on the previous stage of research and an insight on how each of the candidate names will help positioning the brand or organization. The decision making process is based on the criteria of the Name scorecard.

The result of a co-creative approach to naming is that people feel involved and recognized, have experienced the fun of creating together and are proud of their contribution. They carry the final name in their hearts. Achieving buy-in by the broader group of employees or stakeholders becomes much easier.

Experience

Chris Hoerée has personally delivered many name developments over the last 25 years, starting with several car model names for Toyota Europe since the nineties. A lot of the below projects were carried by/in partnership with (TIA) Total Identity Antwerp of which Chris was an associate between 2012-2016.

FARYS	(Public water and multiservice company)
Odisee	(University College)
Solidagro	(Ngo)
Fun.ki	(Digital entertainment)
Pontes	(Crematoria)
Encora	(City of Antwerp, adult education)
Congodorpen	(Ngo)
Ondernemers voor Ondernemers	(Fundraising)
Notaclick	(Website real estate)
Levuur	(Consultancy)
Cerga	(Gas industry)
doe.denk.word	(Artevelde College)
Yaris, Avensis, Verso, Aygo (Toyota)	(Automotive, model names)

Some examples

TMVW became FARYS

HUB-KAHO became Odisee
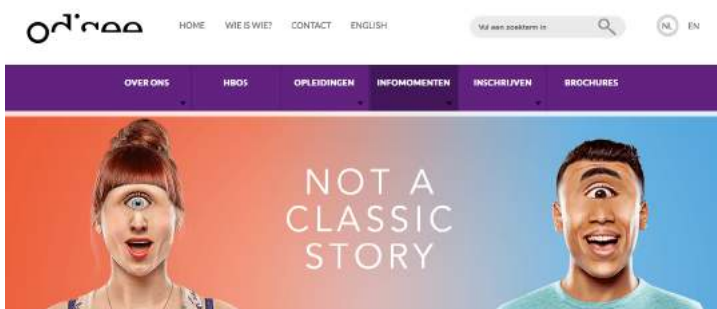
IVCA became Pontes

Bevrijde Wereld became Solidagro

New name for Life Long Learning – City of Antwerp

New product in Digital Entertainment (Cartamundi)