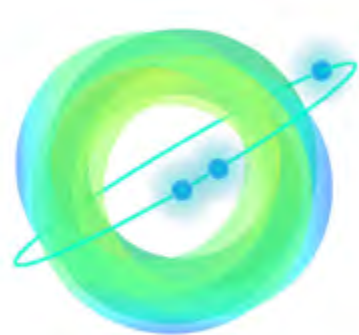




Branding 101

for a Starting Business

7 Qualities That Good Brands Have



Relevant Planet
COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

A good brand holds desirable properties, because it evokes recognition, sets your business apart from the competition, sets expectations of quality from the service or product, inspires its employees, and generates loyalty and referrals.

Imagine your employees and customers are not only loyal to your business, but actively advocating its growth and fortune.

How do successful brands do that? With a lot of planning, hard work, and good CX, another topic in business development. OK then, how do you build a brand from scratch?

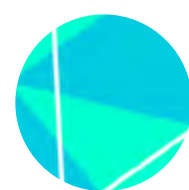
Well, the first steps are critical. If you are just starting out, there is no brand, no recognition, no customers. Perhaps there is a business but it has a weak brand, ie it does not hold the above desirable properties. There may be customers, but high churn and no loyalty. Many times a new brand identity helps businesses reset—in fact, customers have new expectations of improvements and changes when they see a business re-branding, and if it's done right, a business can create better associations with the new brand in the mind of their target customers and discard the old ones.

Not Just A Name

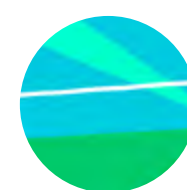
Branding starts with the name. Words are the basis of communication, and we have millions of them to represent ideas and meanings, including names. Besides the name and logo design, brand develops into other elements, such as mission, values, story, customer journey design, marketing, relationships, which all contribute to what the brand ultimately means to the customer. These are important, but for the sake of beginning your business journey, start with the name.

Below I have gathered the important components that make up a good start for a brand. It's not a checklist exactly. Think of it as a list of attractive ingredients and you can recognize which ones make a tasty brand for your business. Most apply to the name itself, but let's not forget the business concept, which is why number one is a strong idea.

Strong Idea



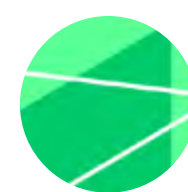
Values & Beliefs



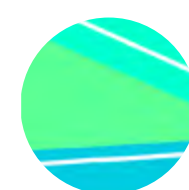
Trust



Easy



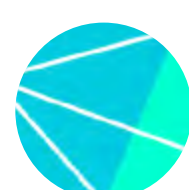
Good Associations



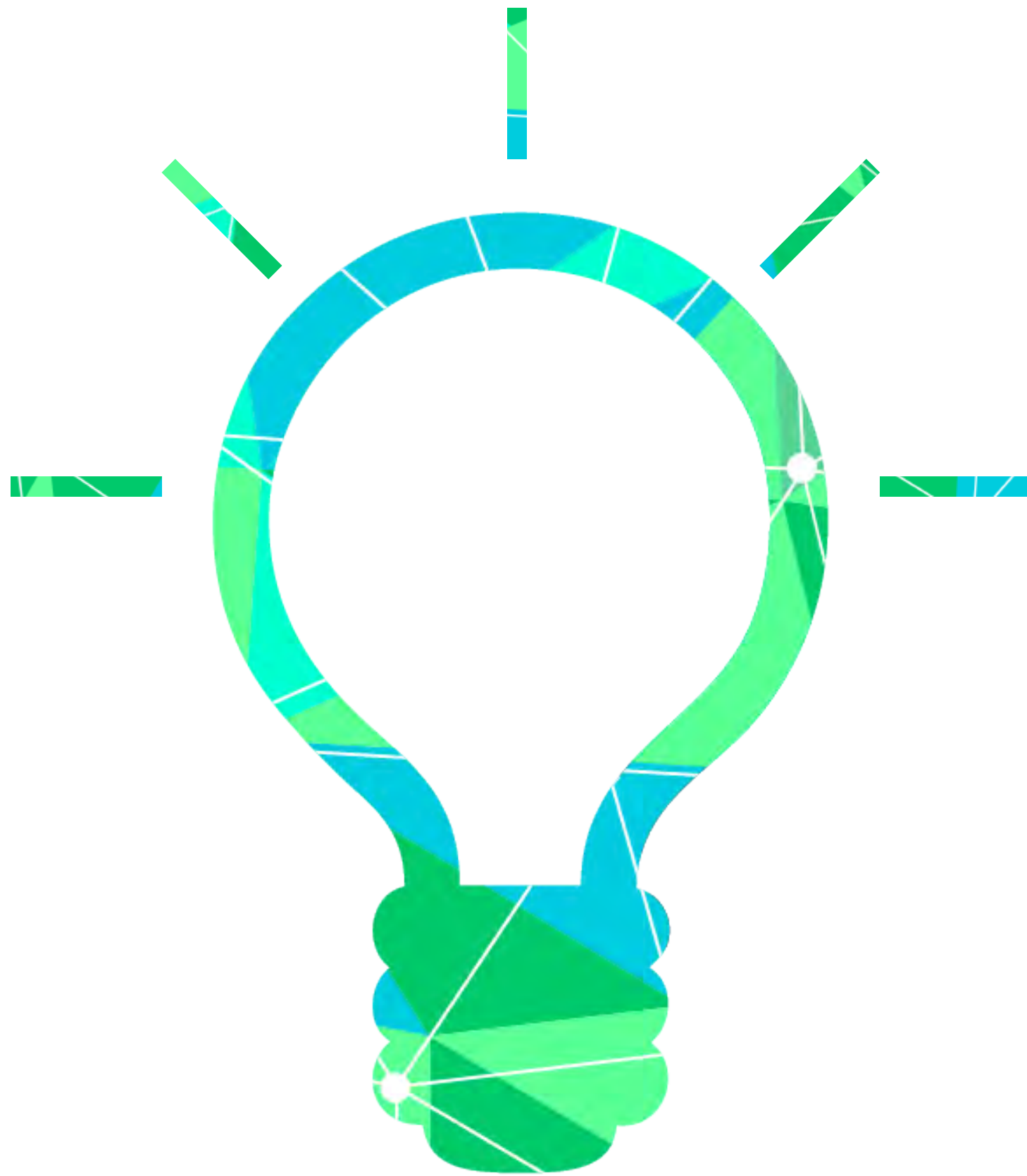
Customer Feelings



Customer Experience



Strong Idea



A strong brand holds a **strong strategy** behind it, and I don't mean marketing and sales. What is the basis of the business? **What do you hope to achieve?** Not profit, that is a by-product of success, needed to keep operations going, for future development and growth. Let's rephrase the questions:

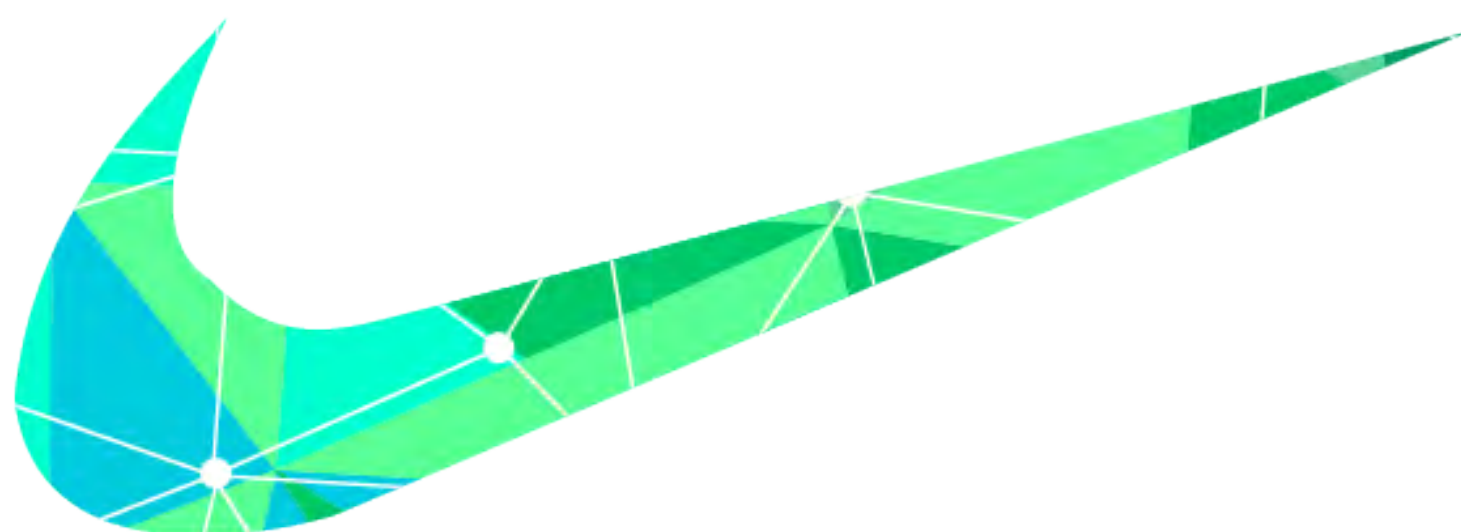
How will your business change your industry, your customers' lives, your society and culture?

If a **movement strategy** is represented in the brand, your business has started communications with customers on a firm footing.

Values & Beliefs



Worldwide, there are hundreds of millions of enterprises. Amid the growing noise, a shrinking amount of global attention means a succinct message has to convey **what the business does and what it believes in**. A strong brand conveys its **company values** and speaks to its target customers. Nike honors the athlete and achievement; the name means ‘victory’ in ancient Greek. You may not have heard of the Fairtrade Foundation, but their brand name is on point. Who are your target customers? The right target customers will share in your company values and beliefs.



Trust

The first time someone sees a brand name represents an opportunity to establish trust.

A smart business understands that. Think back, surely you have seen a lazy business name (worst yet, set in a poorly designed logo) – what did you immediately think and feel? Conversely, when a brand sets the tone for quality, deliberate thinking, customer consideration (yes, it can do all that!), then the customer recognizes **professionalism and credibility**.



Easy

Your brand name should be easy to say and remember.

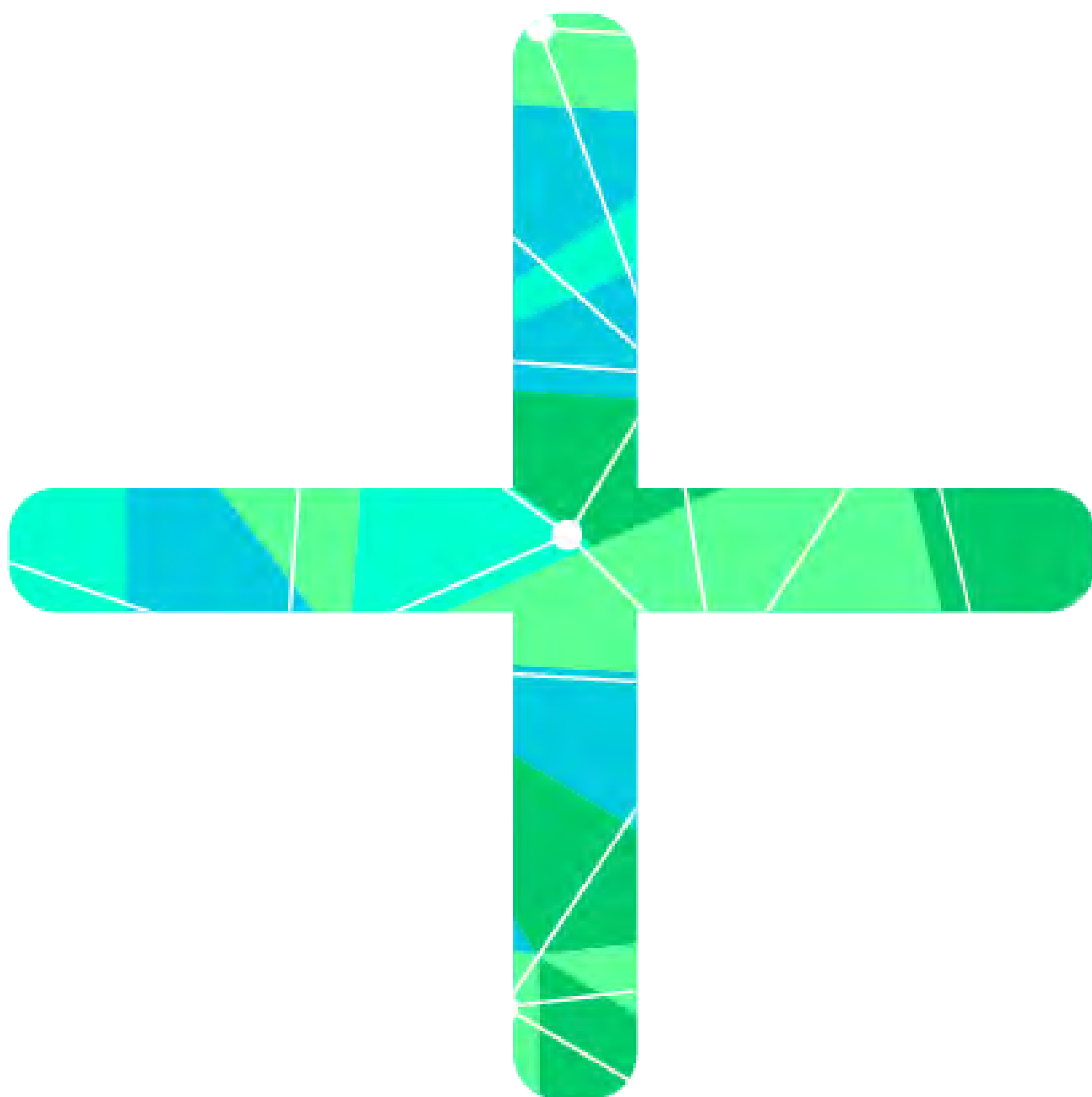
How exactly does one pronounce Huawei or Tag Heuer? When a strange name provides a verbal challenge, potential customers will struggle to **share the brand with others**. You may get them excited about what the business offers them in value, but how will that help if they can't tell their friends the name of the brand without effort?



Good Associations

If a brand name has strong associations with its words, that is what the customers will perceive.

In branding, associations are the key, not word meanings. Consider the following words: oral, high, edibles, shady. Although the words have innocent meanings, the associations tell a different story. They are **established culturally** and with prolonged use in specific contexts – which incidentally is the brief description for the process for creation and dispersion of slang terms. Alternatively, some well-known brands give a rich foundation of meaning with their names: Bounty, PayPal, PlayStation, Dunkin' Donuts.



Customer Feelings

Names and words will ‘feel’ certain ways to customers. Aside from the associated meanings, the different **sounds** in the name have different psychological effects. Consider the brand names Clinique and Hugo Boss. The former is an iamb metrical unit, an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one. Conversely, the latter has a trochee metrical unit, a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one. A name sounds feminine or masculine, depending on rhythmic contrast and which syllable is stressed, first or second.

Next, the letters used also play a role. Phonesthetic phenomenon in linguistics means **letter combinations** allude to light, action, movement, or other concepts. For example, words starting with ‘gl’ relate to behavior of light, such as ‘glimmer’ and ‘glisten’, starting with ‘cl’ relate to hands or holding, such as ‘clasp’ and ‘clutch’, and words starting with ‘fl’ convey movement in air or water, such as ‘flow’ and ‘flit’.

The above covers only the tip of the iceberg; if the brand name includes a word that is already **an established name** (an ancient legend, a city, a story), the feelings arise with whatever associations customers have with that name. You could make up a name, and choose **original sounds**. The danger there lies in what the sounds may mean in other languages. Siri, pronounced colloquially as Shiri in Japan, means ‘buttocks’. Before settling on Amazon, the name Cadabra was abandoned because it sounded like cadaver (meaning corpse).

Without knowing how or why, customers identify with a brand if a name ‘feels’ right to them.

Customer Experience



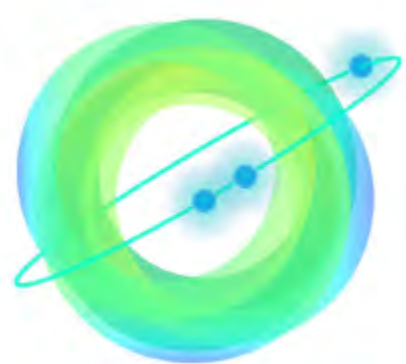
Although the brand may be unfamiliar to customers, the **name or tagline** is capable of **describing the experience** promised with the use of the business services or products. Virgin has a strong tagline of 'changing business for good,' Disney has 'the happiest place on earth,' and Federal Express has 'when it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight.'

A well-thought-out brand communicates to the customers the experience it offers them.

What's Next?

I think I have a name.
What do I do next?

If you are just starting out, you may have already got a name that means something to you. Let's discuss it together. I apply the above principles and help you establish a brand name that inspires you and your customers. **Contact me here.**



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relevantplanet.com

relevantplanet@gmail.com