

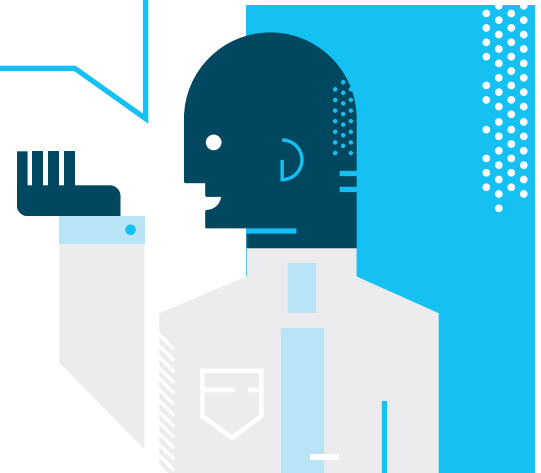


# The MAC Guide to Naming an Organization, Product, or Service

Whether you're starting a new business or launching a new product, a great name can create instant buzz, differentiate you from the competition, and lay the foundation for a great brand. Here at Madison Ave. Collective, we have a tested naming process for creating a memorable name that engages your most critical audiences and positions you for success.

## Contents

1. **Research & Discovery:** Competitive Analysis, Brand Positioning
2. **Name Development:** Three Approaches
3. **Due Diligence:** Trademark & Copyright





# Research & Discovery

All great creative processes start with an in-depth research process. At the MAC, our team calls this Discovery.

Through interviews, audits, and analysis, we build a comprehensive understanding of your market, target audiences, vision, and preferences, as well as how these align with the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. Discovery gives us the tools to approach naming strategically while generating useful new insights for your organization.

When taking on a naming project, two specific Discovery tasks are particularly critical to developing a compelling, differentiated name.

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## Competitive Audit & Analysis

A competitive audit serves two purposes:

1. It quickly identifies names already in use that should be immediately eliminated from consideration.
2. It provides a full picture of the market and the opportunities that exist within it to stand out. For example, if most of the market is relying on straight-forward, functional names, an inventive, evocative name may be just the thing to create a memorable impression — more on that later.

The analysis that follows your competitive audit is where it really pays to have a good strategic partner. Through analysis, you'll come to understand how your competitors are positioning themselves and where the positioning gaps in your market are to be taken advantage of. Your analysis can also shed light on whether it's better to attack these gaps, or just go straight for the market share on which an established brand has staked claim. It can help you define or redefine your brand; it can also show you how to shape the conversation about your organization or product. Finally, a strong competitive analysis keeps our process focused on creating a name that no one but you can own.

## Brand Positioning

After finding out what your competitors are doing, it's time to figure out what you and your stakeholders want and how you can leverage that to stand out from everyone else. Using surveys, focus groups, and interviews, we collect insights from core team members on who you are, what you do, and whom you serve. Doing so helps us determine which part of the market you're going to claim and how to communicate that to your customers.

This is your brand positioning. All great names cohesively tie in the brand positioning of their business or product. When a business or product is well positioned, it actually changes the dynamics of the market, making consumers reconsider their assumptions.

# 2 Name Development

With research leading the way, we start the brainstorm, using three different naming approaches to develop a deck of initial concepts; from there, we proceed through a number of rounds of review and revision to narrow those down to the right name.

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## Functional Names

Functional names are purely descriptive, giving a literal definition of the organization or product. This style of name answers the question, “What is it?” in a straightforward way. Functional names can be useful for products and services that aren’t easy to understand without additional context, for audiences whose communication style is highly literal, or for organizations that want their name to state exactly what they do. For example:

- United States Postal Service
- Cheap Flights
- Ross Dress for Less

## Evocative Names

Evocative or aspirational names are all about the end results, the ideals that your audience seeks to achieve by engaging with your organization or using your product. This style of name answers the question, “What does it mean?” It focuses on the higher-order benefits that your audience hopes to realize. Evocative names can use real words, or they can take a more inventive approach using roots from other languages or poetic, phonetic combinations that evoke a feeling when you say them. A few examples are:

- Smiles Dental
- Lyft
- Nike

## Experiential Names

Experiential names are all about the human experience that your stakeholders have when engaging with your organization or product. This style of name answers the question, “What does it feel like?” It focuses on the immediate benefits — the positive experience — that your audience can expect from you. Some common examples include:

- Gentle Dental
- Comfort Inn
- Regal Cinema

# 3 Trademark Due Diligence

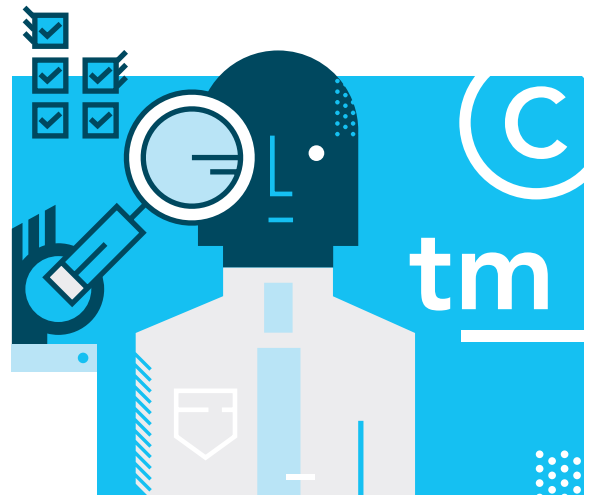
Before we present you with a deck of names to consider, we screen the concepts against the U.S. trademark database. For due diligence, we also search the Internet for entities in your market that may not be formally trademarked. Depending on your organizational needs, we can also screen for trademark availability globally, or in the select countries where you will be doing business; this way we make sure you don't choose a name you can't fully own.

**Following the development of your name, it's your responsibility to seek legal council and formally copyright the name, should you choose to do so.**

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Now that you know what's involved in naming a product or organization, you're ready to embark on a process that's strategic, creative, and diligent.

**Contact us to chat about your project, and find out if our services are a fit for your needs.**



Madison Ave. Collective (our friends call us the MAC) is a strategic branding design and web development firm. We use solid research to help businesses and nonprofits raise their game.

**[madcollective.com](http://madcollective.com)**