

# Developing a strong brand name

As the world moves faster, consumers have less time to think about what they buy. Brands have the power to persuade consumers now, more than ever. A strong brand will make your business more successful than a weak one. The strongest brands are the ones that can be registered as trade marks.

Here's our guide to creating strong and registrable brand names.

## Step one: do the analysis

Developing strong brand names is a discipline that starts by analysing your product and the company's market position. Then define what the brand stands for, its target markets, goals and values.

## Step two: generate ideas

Once you complete your product and market analysis, you can start generating brand name ideas. Get ideas from marketing staff, design agencies and software packages. Don't ignore middle-of-the-night brain waves.

There are many linguistic tactics for developing brands, such as:

- joining words
- symbolism
- onomatopoeia
- composition
- tacking
- clipping
- mimicking
- idiophones
- analogy.

Generate a long list of potential brand names. Don't rule out any names at this stage.

## Step three: shortlist your ideas

Go through your list and think about the following points before deciding whether to shortlist or throw out potential brand names.

Think about each brand and consider whether it is:

- relevant to the market where the product will be sold
- original and unique – does it distinguish your product from competitors' products
- memorable or easily forgettable
- associated with positive or negative imagery
- a stand-alone brand or does it need imagery as well
- viable long-term or does it lack endurance
- succinct
- easily pronounced
- able to be used across all media
- associated with other words - check colloquial use, acronyms and other translations to make sure any associations are positive, not negative
- registrable as a trade mark in New Zealand and overseas.

You should also think about how your potential brand names fit with the:

- heritage and history of your business or product
- current brand positioning of your other products
- names of competitors' and competing products
- vision of the brand's future.

### Step four: filter your ideas for 'x' factor

You should filter your shortlist of potential brand names for marketing 'x' factor. If you want to use the brand name in countries with different cultures and languages, then you should check meanings of your potential brand in each country.

### Step five: get an objective opinion

You might have your own favourite brand name, but it is important not to choose a name until you complete all steps in the process.

The objectivity test is important. You should conduct market research on a scale that suits your budget, time frame, and the nature of the marketplace.

### Step six: make sure you can register your brand as a trade mark

For your brand name to be registrable as a trade mark in most countries, the name should not:

- describe a quality or characteristic of the goods or services the trade mark will be used on
- be a surname
- be a place-name
- be offensive
- be against law or morality
- be deceptive
- suggest Royal Patronage.

Brand names that are made-up words are the most easy to register as trade marks. Made-up words can be more difficult to market because they do not communicate anything to the consumer about the product. But using a product description alongside a meaningless brand name fixes this problem.

### Step seven: check your brand name is available

After you have narrowed down your shortlist of potential brands, the final check is a trade mark clearance search. A search makes sure the same or similar name is not already being used by someone else.

Selecting a trade mark that you cannot use because it is the same or similar to someone else's brand does not make good business sense.

Call A J Park to get the best advice about protecting your valuable trade mark.