

What's in a name?

By [Kory Kredit](#)

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For those of you old enough to have watched the '70's television classic, "WKRP in Cincinnati," you will remember the straight-laced, bumbling and insecure newsman from the lowest-rated radio station in Ohio...

In one episode, he is having a discussion with a man named Steel in which Steel makes the comment that he feels a man's name says a lot about who he is. He then asks the geeky, balding newsman what his name is. The reply: "Les. Les Nessman".

In the same way that "Steel" was a fitting name for the steroid-enhanced deliveryman, "Les" perfectly described the diminutive and incompetent news director.

Over the past two weeks, I've been wrestling with the significance of names from a business perspective. While my focus has been on the name of a new vertical ad network rather than a fictional television character, the primary question is the same. What should a name communicate?

With the proliferation of ad networks and online media companies, how does a company set itself apart in a crowded marketplace? With ad:tech and OMMA AdNets approaching in a month, I thought it would be interesting to look at the names of the exhibiting companies to figure out what their names communicate, or fail to communicate, about their respective companies. I've selected a handful of names and separated them into the following categories:

Obvious/descriptive (think of this like opening a shoe store, and calling it The Shoe Store)

AdBuyer.com
Advertising.com
Permission Data
Prime Visibility
ListMarketer

Vaguely familiar (make up a word that sounds like a word, but isn't really a word)

Acquisio
Alterian
Atrinsic
Etology
Infegy

Alternate spelling (take a word that you like, ask a 6-year-old to spell it for you, and presto! - you've got a name!)

Wyndstorm
Xtranormal
NeuStar
Personifi
Prospectiv

OK - what about *these*? (quick - you've got five seconds, tell me what you think these mean)

Goolara
Lat49
Tinbu
Jivox
mZinga
eZanga
Bango
Rextopia
xy7
W3i
IZEA
Qoof

Naming a company is clearly an inexact science, and while a name may seem odd to some, it may someday become accepted as part of the culture like Google (not likely, though).

As a professional in the online advertising, marketing or publishing world, what do you think a company name and URL should communicate, if anything? Should it be easy to remember, easy to type in the URL, short, descriptive, clever, and unique?

Does your company name make it help stand out in a crowd, or make those in the crowd scratch their heads? Next time you're at a major event, take a few extra minutes to look at the names of the exhibitors and think about which names you think you will remember the week after the conferences are over.

Article courtesy of [MediaPost](#)

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