

Market domination via name identity

 By [Naseem Javed](#)

15 Feb 2012

Global corporate nomenclature is making history, right now, as the ICANN [gTLD](#) platform opens in full swing; the established and largest name brands of the world are now pitted against the newest, recently incubated, globally poised but relatively unknown name brands.

The global image shifts are at play. The coming years will define the new landscape of image and brand-name superiority and spell out a new language, defining market domination via name identity.

It makes little difference where you are located and what type or size of organisation you manage. The fact remains it's going to alter your thinking about marketing and business image and name-identity expansion. Here are the key factors:

- A gTLD dot brand with the right name identity and a business model offers the fastest way to create hyper-visibility and global presence and becomes an intricate device for attracting massive customer acquisition. The old school of traditional advertising marketing and branding is slowly recognising this game changer.
- A gTLD platform also opens new opportunities for branding, marketing and trademark law firms, as critical needs arise for fast-track evaluations of current name portfolios to determine long-term action plans. It calls for realignment of naming architectures to accommodate too many or too few identities or reassessment of current name ownership strategies in light of this new age frontier.
- For many organisations, the application process has hidden naming challenges in the programme, eg, how to differentiate power and evaluate a proposed name, (.car .auto .motor) or how to select a winning combination (.locomoto or automoto,) or (.udrive or idrive,) or (.ucar or mycar;). Advanced level name usability issues will decide winners and losers, including pricing of sub-brand domain naming architecture for a master gTLD name being introduced in the market place.

The boardroom agenda

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How businesses should appoint an Internal Leadership Team to tackle all name-identity issues on an organised basis towards 2012 and beyond.

For big businesses, it would be imperative to create 'layers of name-identity protection' and to acquire a deeper understanding of how to cope with these new and emerging trends.

For middle-sized and regional businesses, it opens highly cost-effective global opportunities to reposition, rename, and rebrand their entire operations as new style market domination.

Any company at the grassroots marketing and business development level must evaluate all of its name brands and identities to answer the following key questions.

- What are the hotspots whereby a slight change in spelling, alpha structure, the meaning and the shade of a name identity could seriously be jeopardised?
- What are the competitive forces in the marketplace that are already attacking a brand name identity and how can they harness new powers to further intensify their attack?
- What are the brand new opportunities that could be brought in as an extension or protection layer to the current brand identity?
- What are complete and brand new concepts that could be created around existing name brands to support and expand sales?
- What are the most sophisticated name expansion structures that will provide a global scale leadership for any new or existing name brand identity?
- If evaluated names have been found weak and damaged, what positive options are available to them with this new global policy?

Here are three basic types of names in use around the world:

1. Hassle free names, because they rest on solid footings.

Examples: Microsoft, IBM, Nokia, Toyota, Intel, Disney, BMW, Gillette, Honda, Google, Cisco, Sony, Nike, IKEA, Nintendo, Gucci

2. The troublesome names, as they carry varying confusion.

Examples: GE, BT, CA, SK, LG, major brand names with two letters are not allowed as two-letter suffixes are reserved for country like .jp for Japan. Names like iSong, Utalk, Citi, AIG, UMS, MPC types will require special scrutiny to stay clear from any confusion with other users. Names that come in two or more parts, like Mercedes Benz, Merrill Lynch, Harley Davidson, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Hewlett Packard, may pass but two-word names are overly cumbersome in usability.

3. The borderline disaster names - these names are simultaneously used by hundreds or thousands making it difficult to claim exclusive ownership.

Examples: United, Premier, Delta or National etc.

Only a minuscule percentage are the hassle-free names. Incidentally, applying the nomenclature rules, the largest majority of last century's brand names fall into 'troublesome' or outright 'disaster' names. However, it's also important to note that once most borderline/disaster names were 'darlings' of the period but, over time, became either generic or lost their distinction in mergers and acquisitions.

Most importantly, last century thinking was not very global and last millennia tools for image expansion were not as cheap and freely accessible as today. According to various studies by my company ABC Namebank on global naming dilution, when you observe that "there are 100 most diluted names around the world in use by some 100 million businesses", a logic-defying picture of waste emerges.

The century-old models start showing cracks and the need for a single universal name clearance solution appears to be the

most logical solution. ICANN's proposal for a single global trademark clearance house is a very bold step forward.

Summary

The boardroom agendas must raise some of these questions.

What are the specific tactical options available for the organisation at this stage? What are the hot buttons on name evaluation for national or global cyber name branding? What are the key steps to get current name identity ahead of competitors on fast track basis? What are the new digital platforms for mass-customer-acquisition? What are the methodical steps to market domination via name identity?

What will it take to get your internal teams ready to articulate on these new platforms?

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