

## **Naming a Product**

Selecting a name for a new product can be one of the most important (and difficult) aspects of the entire product management process. With the huge number of products and services constantly being introduced by competitors, it is critical that your product name helps accomplish your goal – selling it.

Here are some ideas to keep in mind:

**Clarity** – If at all possible, select a name that is descriptive of what you are selling. If you have a new rugged bicycle, which name is more descriptive – Mountain Climber or Model 3Z?

**Memorable** – You want prospects to be able to remember your product. Finding a name that is unique and yet creates a lasting impression can help you differentiate your product and keep top of mind awareness with prospects. With almost all products or services, the customer controls the timing of the purchase decision. You want your prospects to think of your product when *they are ready to buy*.

**Ease** – Along with being easy to remember, you want your product name to be easy to spell and say. With more and more prospects using the Internet to investigate products, search engines can easily miss a product with a name that is easy to misspell. A hard to pronounce name can create some reluctance for some prospects to ask questions. No one wants to be embarrassed by mispronouncing something.

**Familiarity** – If you expect to have multiple product “extensions,” it may be helpful to begin all your product names with the same word or at least the same letter. Having a sense of repetition with product names helps build awareness with potential buyers.

**Protection** – If you have a product name that you think is worth the expense, you may want to apply for a trademark designation. The cost and time required for the trademark process doesn’t have to be huge. You may want to speak with an attorney that specializes in patents and trademarks for this.

**Tag Lines** – It is often very difficult to come up with a product name that accomplishes all of the things mentioned above. Many successful companies combine a somewhat “formal” product name with a tag line that is more descriptive of the benefits of the product.

**Repetition** – After you have lived through the process of creating the product and then naming it, remember that your prospects are still unaware of it. In your product introduction process, don’t be shy about using the name several times. If the name is unusual, clever or has some other special significance, you may even want to mention

how and why the name was chosen. The impression made talking about the name can create the type and length of impression you want.

Two books by Ries and Trout, "Positioning" and "The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing" include some very good insights into the name selection process. Their books focus on product and company naming. You may want to check them out.

You, along with your prospects, share a common trait that must be kept in mind – a shortage of time. Anything you can do with your product name that can enable the prospect to get the most accurate and lasting impression of your product in the shortest amount of time will pay off for you and your customers.