

THE PHILOSOPHY OF NAMING

Tips For Branding Your Next New
Home or Apartment Community

PINOCCCHIO
REAL BOY



fusion

Results Driven Marketing.

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

Pinocchio has a very distinctive name. So did Rumpelstiltskin.

So does Porsche.

The importance and association of a name starts early in our human development and continues to the end. Names are words that form attachments, both in memory and intellect, as well as emotion. A baby's first words in the English-speaking world are often "mama" or "dada". It's what they know. It's where they get sustenance and comfort. In the grown-up world, names are often associated with mental pictures or strong emotions (both good and bad). Words trigger memories and feelings. Words and emotions cut both ways. Words can lead to feelings of affection or quickly escalate a situation to anger and violence.



Think of some of the world's iconic brands. What do you see, feel or intuit when you hear these names?

ROLLS ROYCE

APPLE

PRADA

DISNEY

HILTON

ARMANI

LOUIS VUITTON

WALMART

ROLEX

PILLSBURY

PORSCHE

TRUMP

VERIZON

STARBUCKS

YOPLAIT

VOGUE

COCA-COLA

SCHWINN

HERSHEY

NORDSTROM

Now would be a good time to use a pencil and paper—you might just get inspired—tag the first thought/word/emotion that hits you when you see each name.

Everyone's reaction to these words and names will be quite different, but chances are, if we compared a dozen responses, we would see a strong pattern. Much of this is triggered not by the name itself, but by decades of exposure, our personal experiences, and millions of dollars spent on marketing.

Now let's look at the task of naming a new community, from a small subdivision, to a master planned community to an apartment community. What we hope you saw in the exercise above are some patterns you can use when tasked with helping name a community. Your task in naming a new community will be to jump out ahead of the crowd to establish a brand, without a long history, and, in most cases, without a multi-million dollar marketing budget. It's asking for a lot!

For the past two decades, the Fusion team has developed a list of helpful practices that make this process far less daunting. Here are our top ten techniques for naming.





TEN TECHNIQUES FOR NAMING





1) TELL A STORY.

People retain information from the impressions around them and develop their opinions based on stories they see and hear.

From Adam and Eve to Tony Soprano, we humans have been trying to make sense out of the world by understanding these stories. Each of us has our own story, and how we make our story fit with what is going on around is the way we make sense out of our world. When you're asked to name a "place," you want to think of the story of that place and how you want to tell it. Is it a story of environmental sensitivity, prestige, natural beauty, comfort or change? How will your story, when presented in a marketing context, connect with the personal stories of your potential market? If you make a solid connection, chances are you have a good story.





2) YOUR NAME IS THE OPENING LINE OF YOUR STORY.

A good name will trigger a story.

Think of it as the opening line of a good novel, or the title of a movie. Does the name capture the essence and set the stage for the story? Will the name pique the curiosity of the buyer? Will it resonate emotionally and intellectually? Will it all make sense to them when the potential buyer or renter understands your story?





3) DOES YOUR NAME SUGGEST A "PICTURE"?

Strong names that stimulate an image in the mind of the audience are golden.

It doesn't have to be explicit like "Blue Bunny" ice cream (which is a bit ridiculous) but it does help when a name conjures up a reinforcing image. One of our all-time favorite names for a community was one of our easiest to come up with: "Tall Tree Park." Yes, the entrance was lined with magnificent heritage fir trees. It can be that simple.

But it's never easy!





4) SHORT IS SWEET!

Let's go gentle on all those people who are bombarded by TMI (too much information). Use short, strong, impactful words. And, if you combine words, strive for the memorability of alliteration...

**Just don't try so hard
it becomes corny!**

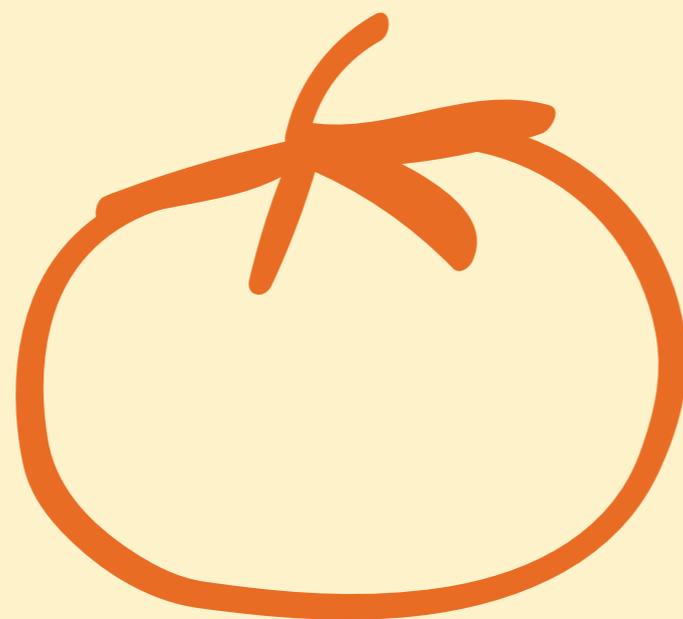




5) (CAN THE AVERAGE PERSON PRONOUNCE IT?)

There is a fallacy that names with “fancy words” or especially those using French words will “class up the joint”!

Sorry, things will not work to your advantage if your market has trouble pronouncing or spelling your new name. Give it up! You’ll just make your audience feel inadequate, which leads to our next point.



TOMATO

OR



TOMATO





6) GOOD MANNERS ARE GOOD BUSINESS.

Nothing throws cold water on a budding relationship quicker than making someone feel stupid.

Extending every effort to go 'high end' is a mistake often made by using an erudite reference that is so "out there" or foreign, or learned, that the average person will just blow by it rather than admit they are "not in the club." No secret insider handshakes here, be as welcoming as possible. Your market will love you for it.

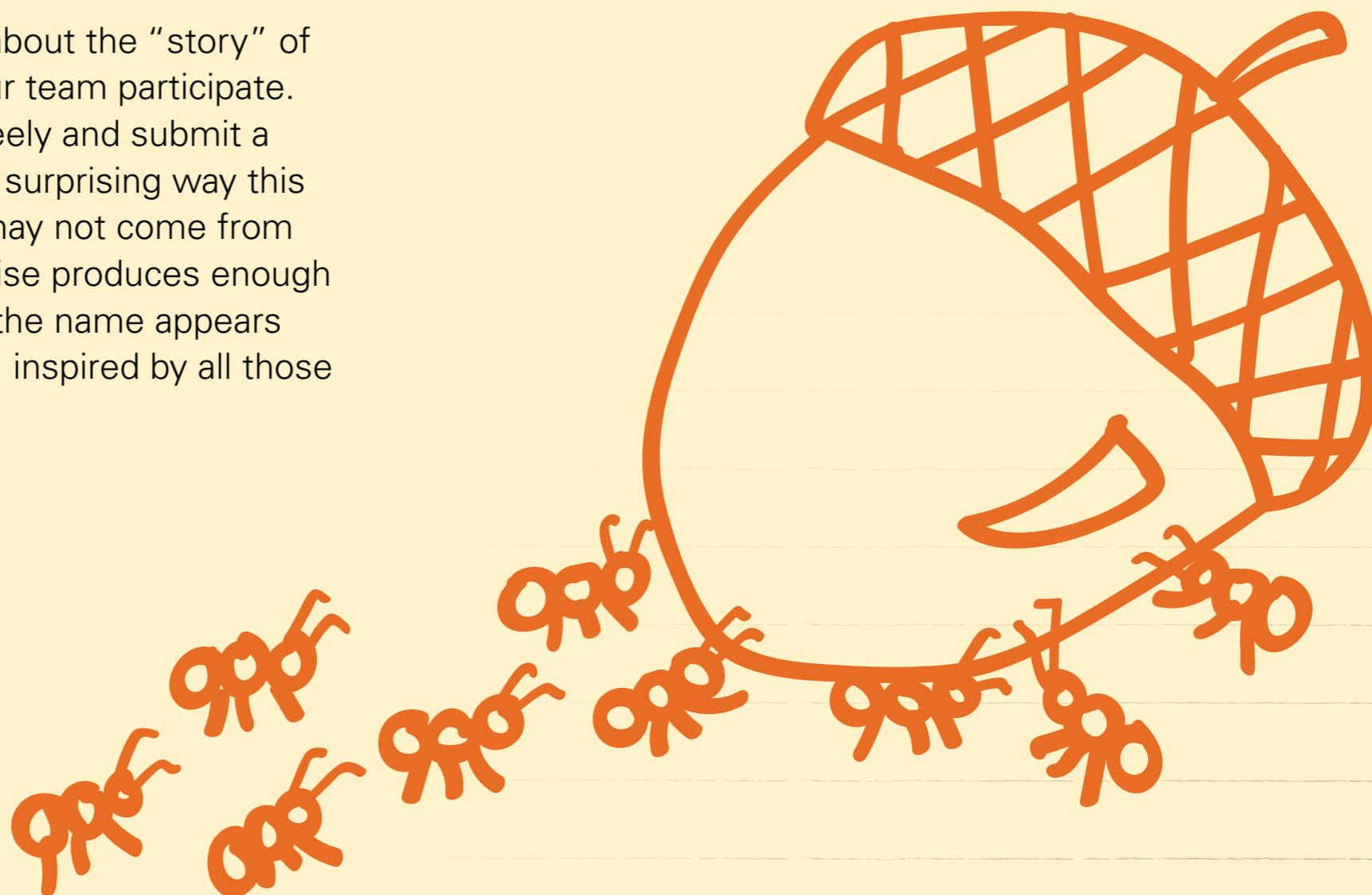




7) COLLABORATE.

Open the naming process to a larger group of your team members.

Establish some key points about the “story” of your community and let your team participate. Encourage them to think freely and submit a long list of possibilities. The surprising way this works is, the actual name may not come from this exercise, but this exercise produces enough energy and inspiration that the name appears somewhere along this path, inspired by all those previous ideas.





8) GOOD IDEAS RISE TO THE TOP!

Another important principle is that when leading or participating in a brainstorming session, do not criticize suggestions made.

There is absolutely no need to “shoot down” the “bad ideas” when brainstorming.

Ideas are just that, ideas, neither good nor bad. The ideas that make sense and meet the criteria rise to the top while the ideas that won't work simply fall off the radar. No feelings need get hurt. No budding creativity needs to be squashed. If you question this principle, all I can say is that I was taught this principle by some very smart Disney Imagineers.

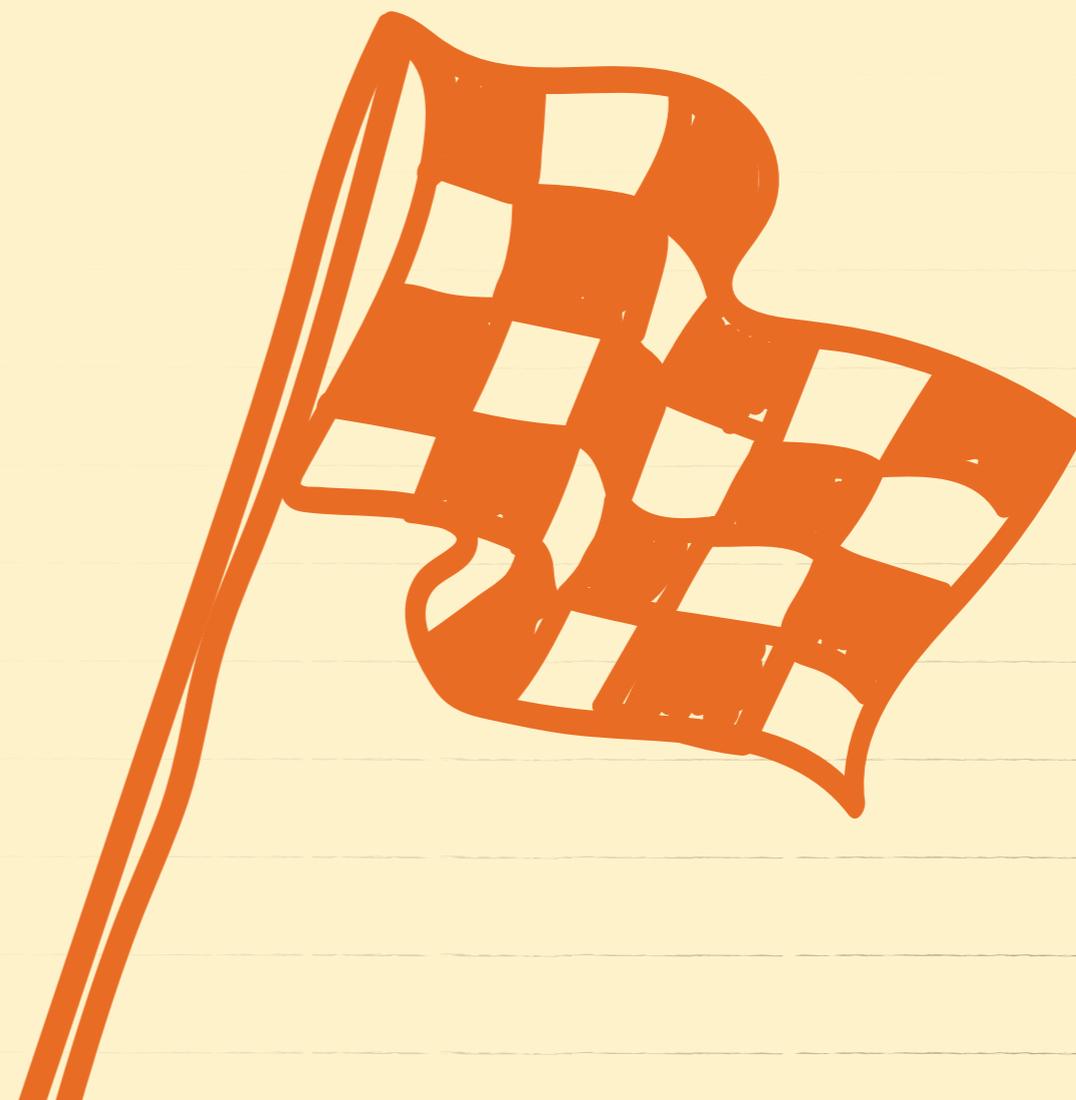




9) QUIT WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD.

Don't fall into the mire of creative navel gazing.

The creative process does not need to be painful! In fact, if you've done your homework and defined your story, collaborated with your team, and created a safe atmosphere, you will quickly get to an effective name. When you get there, halt the "naming" process and get on with the execution. Move into developing the words and pictures that will support your name!





10) DOES YOUR NEW NAME PASS THE "I LIVE AT _____" TEST?

Yup. It's that simple. If your name feels comfortable and believable in the sentence above, you just might have a winner.

I LIVE AT
_____:

IT'S AWESOME!



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