

Definition of the Basic Steps

A. Task Headline

Define a clear statement of what it is you want to accomplish with this ????. Make it specific enough to provide direction, open enough to allow for exploration. We need a name for this product by Thursday's presentation (Includes key success criteria – i.e. Thursday)

B. Analysis

Five basic questions must be answered. They can lead one to do a great deal of work or they might be answered in a few minutes. Different questions may be suggested by different statements of the task. Spell out 3-5 success criteria

C. Collecting Names/Ideas (Round Robin)

You will be asked to put down on paper all of your names/ideas, big and small, good and bad, obvious and obscure. You will also be given exercises (both creative and analytic) to help you generate additional beginning names. You may get names/ideas from others.

D. Selection

You will be asked to select names based on intrigue rather than feasibility. And you will have to prioritize to create a short and manageable list of beginning names.

E. Name Development

You will develop many optional ways of approaching the basic name. You will select several of these as potential new statements of what the name is. This will include a quick web search to find its current uses.

F. Final Screen

You will develop a few key criteria and screen your list of names against these. From this, you will rank your leading names.

G. Next Steps

You will complete the process by examining next steps for each name separately and as a group. You will be encouraged to be realistic.

Flow Comparison

Standard Flow for Invention	Process Flow for Naming
A. Task Headline	A. Task Headline
B. Analysis	B. Analysis
C. Ideas	C. Criteria Generation
	D. Criteria Selection
	E. Name Generation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity exercises • Analytic exercises
D. Selection	F. Selection
E. Concept Development	G. Preliminary Screen
F. Final Screen	H. Name Development
G. Next Steps	I. Final Screen
	J. Next Steps

CELEBRATE!

How Naming is Special

The primary distinction is in the generating and selecting of criteria for naming and in the need to do at least a preliminary name search. Unfortunately, for those of us who are brainstorming purists, the way in which the names will eventually be evaluated needs to be established early in your process. For many types of problems, setting your criteria early will dramatically limit your search for solutions. Limiting yourself through early problem definition is particularly harmful if you believe that defining the problem is more than half of the solution—the process of defining limits. One of the first limits you will discover through task definition is that your ability to solve the problem by redefining it is gone.

In naming, the possible options can easily be numbered in the hundreds of thousands. Cutting down on this universe early is one of the critical steps in the process.

You may have experienced using a software package designed to help in the naming process. I find them to be wonderful tools for capturing the universe (and I encourage you to use them as part of this process). But once you have the universe... well, what do you do with 16,000 possible combinations?

You will find the Innovation Focus approach to naming to be high touch. That does not mean that I am downplaying the high tech solution to your finding a new name. It does mean that the high tech approach is being done very well and that the area where most naming seems to fail is in creating a gut level of appeal for the company champion, the inventors, and their organizations.

In naming, we must attend to our feelings. Use logic, use creativity, but listen to your heart.

*Thoughts are the shadows of feelings—
Always darker, emptier, and simpler.*

Nietzsche, 1882-1887

A rose by any other name.....

What is in a name?

A great deal, actually.

Naming is deceptively simple. To get a nice name doesn't take much. To get a name you can protect, fits your positioning and product, and can lead you into the market is, to say the least, a challenge. I have done enough naming to have discovered a few rules:

- Naming is and should be done last.
- It should be planned into the process.
- It is usually done too early or too late.

