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**DESIGN WITH SEO IN MIND**

# Choosing searchable product names in product design

**September 8, 2016**

**([https://www.godaddy.com/garage/smallbusiness/launch/choosing-searchable-product-names-in-product-design/#disqus\\_thread](https://www.godaddy.com/garage/smallbusiness/launch/choosing-searchable-product-names-in-product-design/#disqus_thread))**

When it comes to choosing product names, you've got to consider more than just appealing to people.

In the always-on smartphone world, we have to brand our products based on searches by both people and machines. No matter the product — offline, online, service-based, healthcare or what have you — assume people will be searching for it at some point in the digital world.

And how you name your products makes all the difference. It ties into search engine optimization (<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/smallbusiness/market/seo-small-business-websites-ebook/>) (SEO), the art and science of attracting people to our websites and digital properties.

## Are your product names already in existing domains?

Before we go any further, do some due diligence to determine if your product names already exist in the wild. Google your product names and use GoDaddy's domain name finder to determine if someone's already got them. Go ahead, try it now:

If you skip this important first step, you could have both SEO and trademark problems (<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/smallbusiness/launch/domain-names-trademarks-and-intellectual-property-oh-my/>)... Ouch!

## Product names: branded vs. unbranded

When you mix SEO with product names, there are two kinds of searches: branded and unbranded (<http://marketing.risdall.com/blog/keyword-basics-branded-vs-non-branded-provided>).

**Unbranded searches** are when someone searches for a word or phrase that describes your product, but isn't your product name. For example, someone searching for "soda" is conducting an unbranded search.

**Branded searches**, on the other hand, are when someone searches for your product, service, or company by name. So, someone searching for "Diet Coke" is conducting a branded search.

**When we name a product, we are not only choosing what our customers see, but also choosing how they eventually find us.**

Assuming our product or service is worth buying and talking about, word of mouth will encourage others to search for our product by name. With the importance of product names established, let's look at four cardinal product naming rules for SEO.

### 1. Avoid generic product names



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Search engines try to match queries with pages that authoritatively relate to search requests. Very often, generic words and phrases have extremely authoritative sites (i.e. Wikipedia) as the top few results. So when you name a product something generic, you're automatically competing with some of the top sites on the web.

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## Generic product names often face stiff search competition.

A bad product name would be something like "Coffee" or "Hot Coffee." Many people will search for that, true, but they won't find you first. Now make that terrible name "Death Wish Coffee," and you've got yourself a distinct, unique name.

And when people search for it, they'll more easily find you.

## 2. Avoid difficult-to-spell names



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Search engine results are only as good as what gets put into them, and those search terms come from us humans. Avoid product names which are difficult to spell; the road to being findable is significantly harder if no one correctly types your product name. Additionally, by having a difficult-to-spell name, you risk a competitor seizing any misspellings and implementing competitive SEO strategies to steal away your traffic.

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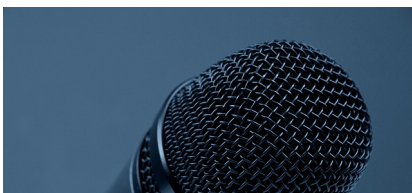
## Avoid product names that are hard to spell.

For example, a bad product naming trend in the early days of the web was omitting vowels from names, like Tumblr and Flickr. We know these names today, but they're a couple of the few companies that survived. We don't remember the thousands of similar companies long gone.

Imagine you had a coffee grinder for sale. Naming it "CoffeeGrindr" would be a terrible choice; most people would spell it without removing space or vowels, and the chances of people finding your specific product would be lower.

Also, avoid inserting your ego into product names. If your own name is difficult to spell, consider the simple fact that "Torkkiewicz & Lappazzarelli Coffee Grinder," for example, actually might not get used in many searches.

## 3. Plan for voice search



(<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/product-names-voice-search.jpg>)

With services like Amazon Alexa (<http://alexa.amazon.com/spa/index.html>), Google Assistant (<https://www.google.com/search/about/learn-more/now/>), Siri (<http://www.apple.com/ios/siri/>) and Cortana (<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/17214/windows-10-what-is>), we are increasingly searching for products by voice.

Just think about how people will say them to automated assistants. If you don't already own the devices and services



## Your product names should be memorable and easy to pronounce.

This is especially important for domain names. Dashes, dots, unusual subdomains and clever intentional misspellings will confound the voice-recognition software of many virtual assistants, potentially sending valuable search traffic elsewhere!

### 4. Plan for visual search

Product apps like Amazon's already incorporate visual searches to a degree; take a picture with your smartphone and they'll try to find a better price. Meanwhile, Google's mobile-search app can do the same thing with reverse-image searches (<https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/1325808?hl=en>).

Part of your product naming should involve logo, branding and fonts. Pick a font (<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/webpro/design/which-web-fonts-to-use-for-web-design-the-3-commandments/>) that's easily readable in slightly blurry photos. That'll make it easier for a machine to recognize and search for it. Consider a visually distinctive, bold logo that an image or brand search could recognize.

For example, these logos are easy to recognize:



(<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/recognizable-brand-logos.png>)

Humans recognize these logos, but machines recognize them just as well. And as our smart devices continue to evolve, SEO and search marketing (<https://www.godaddy.com/online-marketing/seo-tools?isc=cardigan>) will evolve as well. If you expect your products to be on the market for more than a year, think about how they appear, visually, as smart devices are only getting more prominent.

### Now let's recap and discuss

Naming a product for findability requires more than just creative brainstorming. Today, we must brand and name products with both humans and machines in mind. Choose your product names wisely, adhering to the guidelines above, and you'll increase your chances of being found.

And while it's true nobody likes name-callers, let's sound off anyway. If you've got a tidbit of advice or a question of your own about product names, don't be shy about posting it in the comments.

Also published on Medium (<https://medium.com/@cspenn/396d1ef6536c>).

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## Christopher S. Penn

### (<https://www.godaddy.com/garage/author/christopher-s-penn/>)

VP of Marketing Technology at SHIFT Communications (<http://www.shiftcomm.com/>), Christopher S. Penn is an authority on digital marketing and marketing technology. A recognized thought leader, author and speaker, he has shaped three key fields in the marketing industry: Google Analytics adoption, data-driven marketing and PR, and email marketing. Known for his high-octane, here's how to get it done approach, his expertise benefits companies such as Citrix Systems, McDonald's, GoDaddy, McKesson and many others. His latest work, Leading Innovation (<http://www.leadinginnovationbook.com/>), teaches organizations how to implement and scale innovative practices to direct change. You can find him on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/christopherspenn>), Twitter (<https://twitter.com/cspenn>), LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/cspenn>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/cspenn/>).

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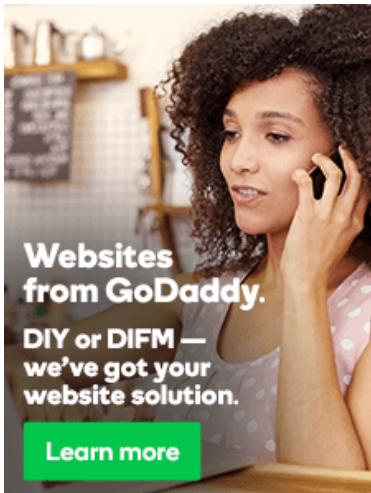
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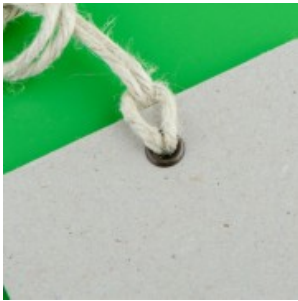
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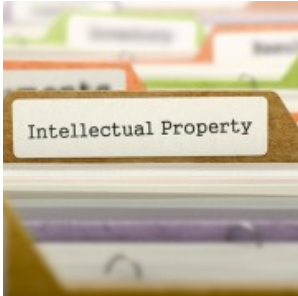
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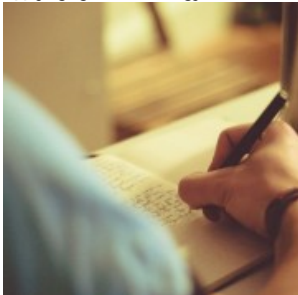
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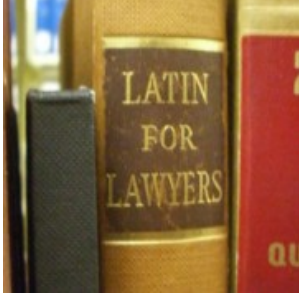
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