

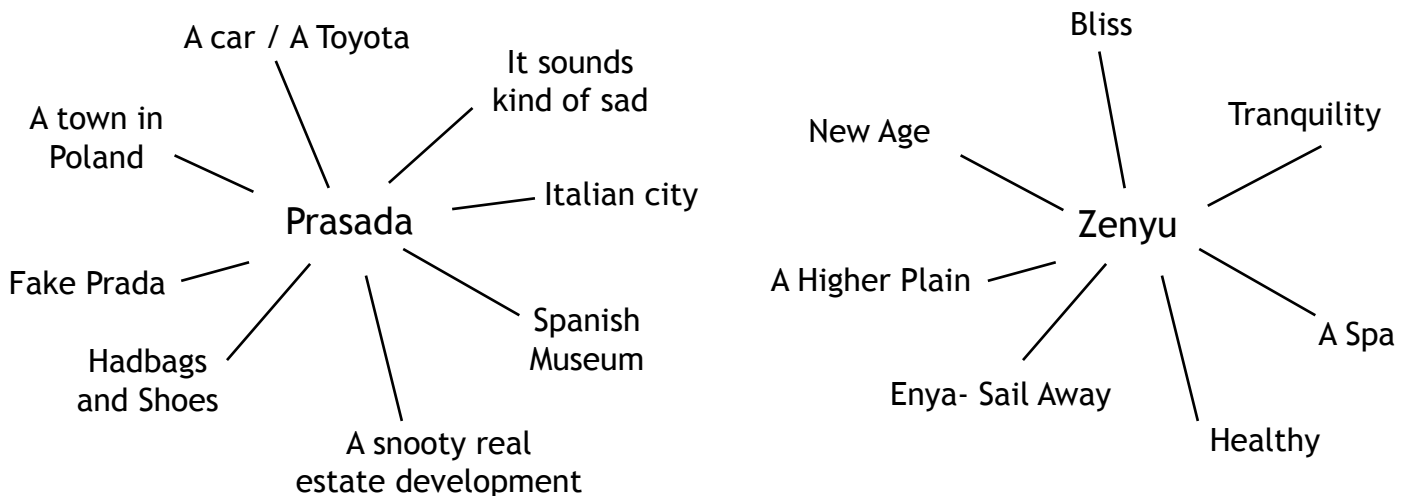
Choosing a Name

With so many wrong ways to go about evaluating a name, what is the right way? Here is an inexpensive way to mimic what multinationals with big budgets do when they make name decisions.

Some criteria for a good name are easy: A dotcom domain name is a must. The name has to be unique. You should be able to grow into it. But what about the hard part—knowing when you have a fit in terms of strategy and personality?

Large companies do research around impressions and associations—often in multiple languages. You can mimic that research without spending money by getting unbiased, outside opinions from people not connected to your business. Take your top name candidates and show them off. Take them to friends, potential customers, even your dry cleaner. Don't ask people if they like the name, ask them what the name makes them think of. You aren't looking for people to be able to describe your product based on the name. Instead, you want to see what concepts come to mind.

Take this example. This client was naming a holistic natural health product and had narrowed the list to a few promising name candidates. Taking them out to gather comments, it quickly became apparent which name was the best fit. It didn't matter that all the names had a similar sound and meaning. To outsiders, only one name evoked the right associations and impressions.



Take the time to gather associations and impressions from as many people outside your company as possible. The results will surprise you and will give you valuable input—beyond simple meaning and aesthetics—for making your ultimate choice.

