

Steps for Establishing or Creating a New Name

The process of establishing or selecting a new name for an organization works best when it involves in-depth consideration of the organization's mission, goals and brand. The name of the organization should portray and encompass both the work and the character/feel of the organization. Be sure to engage constituents and stakeholders so you don't base it on one person's ideas alone.

Here are suggested steps:

- 1) Write a brief statement about who you are and where you want to go. In the case of an organization or entity: the entity's mission, vision and goals including where it is now and where it is going. Think ahead! This statement is important because it is the basis upon which your team will assess the suggested names.
- 2) Think of some words that portray the character/feel of the entity. Some examples might be: savvy, current, cool, progressive, thoughtful, etc.
- 3) Make a list of suggested names. Use resources such as newspapers, books, quotations, Google, ask friends, etc. Cast a wide net and write them all down.
- 4) Convene a focus group! Use an independent facilitator, if possible, to explore these names. There are at least two ways to approach this:
 - A. Circulate the names to the group in advance along with the statement and the character/feel words ahead of time.
 - B. Circulate to the group only the descriptive statement and the character/feel words ahead of time.Option A will provide focus group participants with more time to think about it. This is useful if you want that time for comparison and analysis. Option B will provide focus groups with little time to think about it and is useful if you want to observe/hear more visceral responses to names.
- 5) Get feedback from the group on the different names and how they serve/connect with the statement. Watch people's faces, too! Not just what they say or write down. If you like, you can evaluate names using a scale or some other method to capture participants' perspectives.
- 6) Try the name out with others. If people don't get it, go back to the work that came out of the focus group and consider alternative names.

Check that the name you have selected is available, either after step 3) or 6). Some further tips on name availability can be found at: <http://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/make-sure-proposed-business-name-available-30195.html> .