

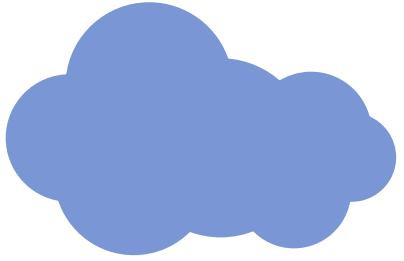
A DECADE IN DOMAINS

2010-2020


Presented by MarkUpgrade



Part 1



From door to door, print advertising and billboards, through digital marketing, search engines and now - the world accessible from a screen in our pocket - the way businesses reach customers has, and will continue to change over time.



2000-2010 was marked with the smart phones making everything possible on the go and from the palm of our hands, big data - tech giants (and not only) discovering the power of tracking consumer behavior, blockchain, AI and voice.

Spotting consumer trends and patterns, voice searches, multiple devices - all that has affected and taken the way entrepreneurs see and use domains to a whole new level.

Let's look at how have brands and their domain names evolved over the last decade.

Main Points

- 1 Brands simplified their names
- 2 Brands rebranded: complete name change
- 3 Short & sweet: brands picked short names
- 4 Descriptive names
- 5 Personal names as brands
- 6 Generation Alpha of brands
- 7 Epic fails of the decade
- 8 Direct to consumer brands that shine
- 9 Blockchain and AI brands



Brands simplified their names

With everything being easily accessible online, the competition for attention is more fierce than ever.

Simpler, shorter, easier to spell, remember, share, type - the future belongs to those who can adapt and thrive above the noise.



Perfection is achieved, not
when there is nothing more to
add, but when there is nothing
left to take away.

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery -

UberCab.com - UBER.com

Founded in 2010, Uber was initially called UberCab. The startup changed their name UberCab to Uber and bought the Uber.com domain name from Universal Music Group, back in 2010.

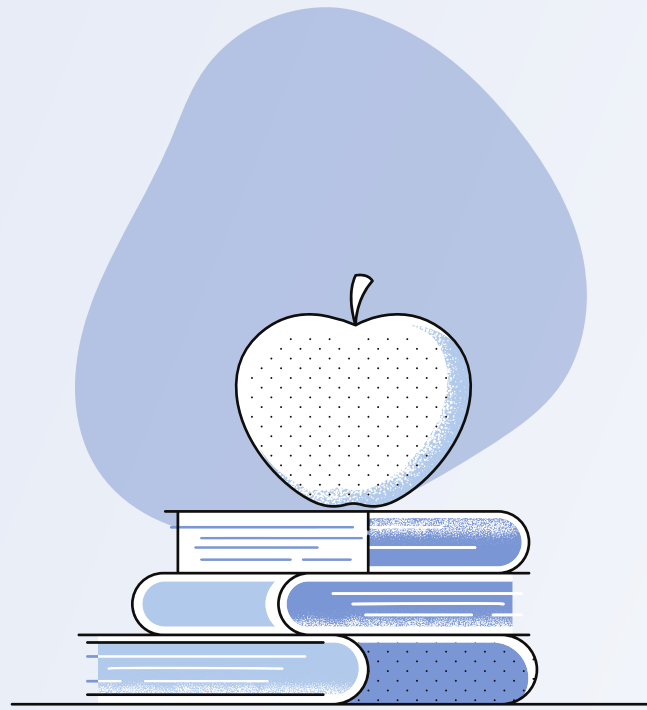
Uber gave UMG a 2% stake in exchange for the domain. Uber would be worth around \$17 billion four years later, but Universal Music Group did not partake in this success, since at some point before this valuation, the company sold back its shares to Uber for \$1 million. Does "Oops" cover it?



TheFacebook.com - Facebook.com - FB.com

On February 4, 2004, Zuckerberg launched a site under the name "TheFacebook", originally located at TheFacebook.com. Recognizing the need for a shorter and better domain name the company dropped 'The' from its name after purchasing the domain name Facebook.com in 2005 for \$200,000. In 2010, Facebook bought FB.com domain from the American Farm Bureau Federation and paid for it \$8.5 million dollars, which is 42 times more than the company originally paid for Facebook.com.

When asked in 2009 by a TechCrunch interviewer, what he might do differently today if he knew any better, CEO Mark Zuckerberg said he “would get the right domain name”.



JambaJuice.com - Jamba.com

Founded in 1990, Jamba was formerly known as Jamba Juice.

In June 2019, Jamba Juice dropped the word “Juice” to reflect its wider range of products. The 850-unit chain acquired the exact brand match domain name Jamba.com upgrading from JambaJuice.com. They now offer cereal and fruit bowls, kiddy menu, breakfast and baked goods.

“Jamba” is a play on the Swahili word “jama,” meaning “to celebrate.”

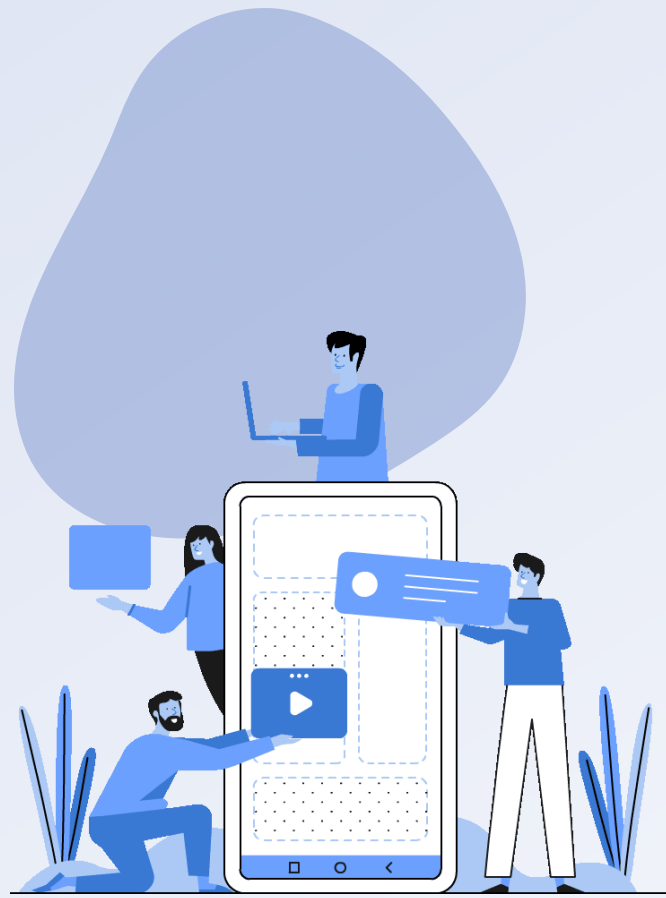
HeadlightsDepot.com - Headlights.com

HeadlightsDepot upgraded its domain name from HeadlightsDepot.com to Headlights.com to match their the vision of becoming the authority in automotive lighting.

Vendors and customers both refer to the company as Headlights, and so acquiring Headlights.com is a formal recognition of HeadlightsDepot's niche, and its increasing visibility and name recognition in a competitive market.

"For us, having the premium domain Headlights.com is the modern-day equivalent of opening a storefront on 5th Avenue. It promotes both awareness and trust."

Jay Tannenbaum, CEO of Headlights



Massdrop.com - Drop.com

On 29 April, 2019, Massdrop unveiled its rebrand to Drop. The company smartly acquired the exact brand match domain name Drop.com. Massdrop.com now directs to Drop.com, and they also managed to secure the @Drop Twitter and Instagram handles.

“The name Massdrop originated when we were just a group-buying site, but we are so much more than that now -- and you are anything but “mass.”

“This new brand reflects how we’ve evolved since our beginnings in 2012, from group-buying site, to commerce platform and now, a product company made possible by your deep commitment to passions.” - Steve El-Hage - CEO of Drop

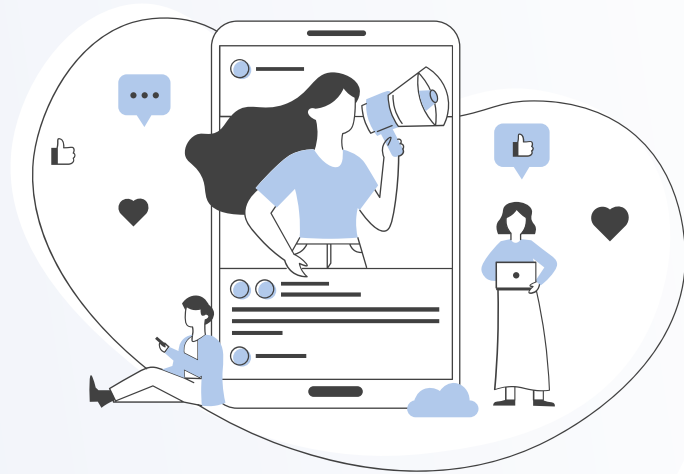
TeslaMotors.com - Tesla.com

Tesla Motors was founded in July 2003 by engineers Martin Eberhard and Marc Tarpenning. The company's name is a tribute to the well known inventor and electrical engineer Nikola Tesla. Tarpenning bought the domain name TeslaMotors.com on April 23, 2003.

Faraday was the alternative name choice for Tesla Motors selected by Eberhard. In February 2017, Tesla Motors shortened its name to Tesla and the company upgraded its domain name from TeslaMotors.com to the exact brand match Tesla.com. Elon Musk, co-founder and CEO of Tesla, revealed that he invested \$11 million to buy Tesla.com in February 2016 from its previous owner. The new domain matches the vision and image of the company - Tesla produces a lot more than just cars now.

“Buying Tesla.com took over a decade, \$11M & amazing amount of effort. Didn’t like TeslaMotors.com even when we were only making (cars).”

- Elon Musk, co-founder and CEO of Tesla



UrbanCompass.com - Compass.com

In February 2015, brokerage Urban Compass has shortened its name to Compass in a bid to make its brand more memorable.

“Compass is a simpler, more universally memorable brand name that speaks directly to the connection between people and technology that is so central to what we are building,”

- Matt Spangler, Head of Marketing and Creative for Compass.

MrChewy.com - Chewy.com

Chewy was founded under the name "Mr. Chewy" in September 2011 by Ryan Cohen and Michael Day. The domain Chewy.com appears to have been sold by Frank Schilling's Name Administration at the time. The price of the domain was kept private. In 2017, PetSmart acquired Chewy.com for \$3.35 billion in the largest e-commerce acquisition up to date.

Sharethebus.com -Bus.com

Montreal-based startup Sharethebus, which aims to make it easier to charter busses, rebranded to Bus.com in April 2017.

“The rebrand from Sharethebus to Bus.com better positions us as a more holistic solution for the industry in general and the population at large.” - shared CEO Kyle Boulay. “Our name no longer encompassed who we were”

“We want to drive people to the website, we want people to understand what we’re doing and this will help us accomplish that.”

- Dave Lastovskiy, the company’s head of marketing.

ArcadiaPower.com - Arcadia.com

D.C.-based renewable energy startup Arcadia Power rebranded to simply Arcadia in December 2019. The startup upgraded its domain name from ArcadiaPower.com to the exact brand match Arcadia.com. Arcadia dropped the word “Power” to better match its mission and vision.

“We don’t own power plants or take positions in the energy market. We are, first and foremost, a mission-driven technology company building a platform that advocates for consumers, not big power companies. Beyond a shorter name and a refreshed logo, it’s important that we continue to evolve and distinguish ourselves from retail energy suppliers or utilities.”

CEO Kiran Bhatraju

EnemyEyewear.com - Enemy.com

When Aaron Marino, a very popular men's lifestyle blogger, started a new sunglasses company called ENEMY, he searched the various ENEMY domain names and ENEMY trademark — and they were available for sunglasses. In October 2018, Enemy Eyewear was conceived, with the registration of at least two domain names, EnemyEyewear.com and EnemyShades.com.

Those names however didn't reflect the strive for luxury nor did they allow the brand to expand to other product categories. In February 2019, Aaron acquired the exact brand match domain name Enemy.com.

“This is a luxury brand, everything has to go with it. The domain is premium. The quality is premium. The packaging is premium.” - shares Aaron Marino



The company is now offering bracelets and cuffs too.

DominosPizza.com - Dominos.com

Domino's pizza story began in 1960 with just one location. It was founded by James Monaghan, Tom Monaghan and Dominick DiVarti. Back then, Domino's was called DomiNick's. Five years later, Tom Monaghan was looking to rename the business as Dominick DiVarti wouldn't let him franchise his name for more stores. One day, an employee, Jim Kennedy, returned from a pizza delivery and suggested the name "Domino's". Monaghan loved the idea and officially renamed the business to Domino's Pizza.

The company grew quickly, and by 1978 there were around two hundred outlets in the country. The pizza chain changed its name from Domino's Pizza to Domino's in 2012 because — as they say — the brand is about so much more than pizza.

The company has both DominosPizza.com and Dominos.com domain names.

Bfffer.com - BufferApp.com - Buffer.com

Buffer was not always called Buffer. When Joel first launched the company he named it Bfffer, which was inspired by forrst and dribble, two companies doing pretty well at the time. He actually only wanted two f's but the domain was already taken so he settled with three. The company started out with Bfffr.com, when Joel launched Buffer in late 2010. Joel went on to change it to bufferapp.com, to make things a bit more clear.

“Our customers landed on Buffer.com and tried to call them to discuss a credit card charge. This was greatly damaging to Buffer's customer service delivery. It's likely that potential leads were also landing on the wrong website and phoning the wrong company as a result.”

On 10 March 2015 Buffer announced that they have acquired the exact brand match Buffer.com. The previous owners were SealGuard Heat Sealing Buffers.

“We felt that the longer we waited to buy the buffer.com domain, the more expensive it would get. Every year that Buffer would get bigger would mean that the owner could feel comfortable charging a higher sum. So going about it sooner rather than later felt right.” Rodolphe Dutel, Buffer Product Specialist

Rebrands

Nobody picks a name for their brand with the idea to change it. But businesses change - sometimes they expand over borders and offering beyond their founders wildest dreams, sometimes there are legal issues, sometimes the market demands it, sometimes the original name was a compromise to begin with.

Let's look at some notable rebrands of the past decade.



The only constant in life
is change.

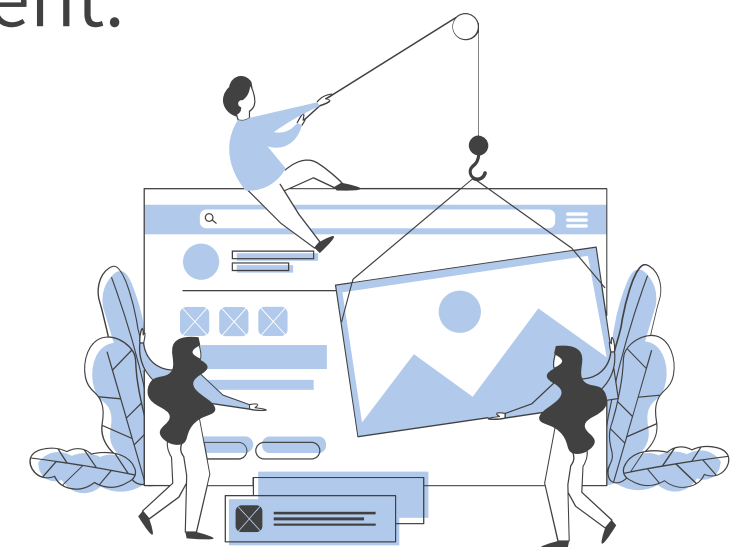
- Heraclitus -

EventBoard.com - Teem.com

As many startups, EventBoard started as its founders were trying to solve a problem they had themselves - they were struggling with sharing conference rooms. After raising \$13.5 Million, in October 2016, the founders decided to change their name from EventBoard to Teem to reflect their expanded focus on optimizing the digital workplace.

EventBoard was developing software for conference room displays. Teem offered a lot more - meeting tools and workplace analytics. The negotiation for the sale of Teem.com went on for months and in October 2016, it was revealed that the company has acquired the exact brand match domain name Teem.com in a deal with a cash and an equity component.

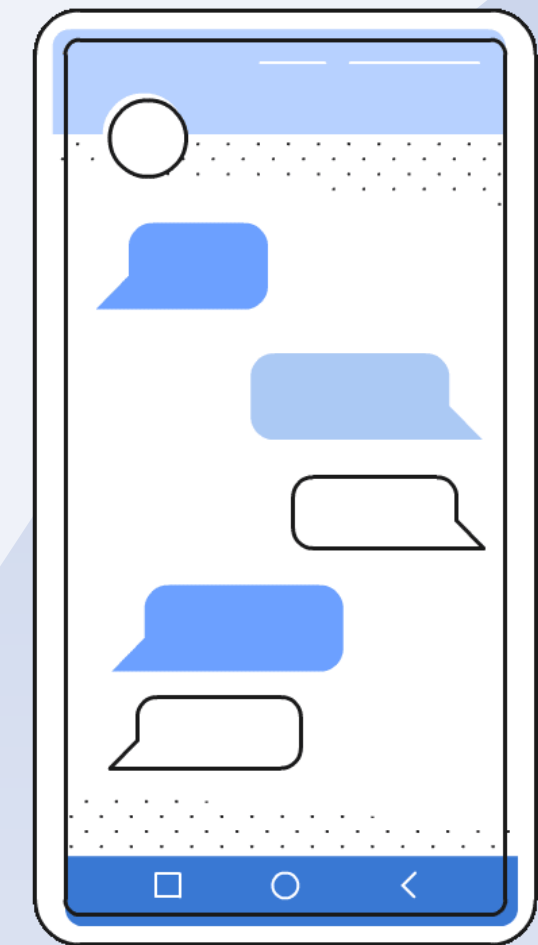
In 2018 Teem got acquired by WeWork.



Picaboo (app) - Snapchat.com

The first version of Snapchat was launched under the name Picaboo as an app on the appstore. The name Snapchat is derived from the intention of sending short snaps that disappear.

In September 2016, Snapchat rebranded to Snap Inc to reflect its new direction as a "camera company". The company acquired the simple and short domain name snap.com



DaPulse.com - Monday.com

Dapulse, a project management startup, changed its name to Monday because no one could figure out what its name meant (at one point a TV anchor actually started laughing at the name while interviewing a Dapulse employee on air).

The startup acquired the exact brand match domain Monday.com. And in case you're wondering, the original name was chosen because there was a domain name available to register.

In 2018 Monday raised \$50 million in a series C round of funding led by Stripes Group, with participation from Insight Venture Partners and Entrée Capital.

DataSafe.com - Destruction.com

For nearly three decades, the shredding/document destruction firm Datasafe, Inc. was known by the name Datasafe Information Security. In September 2019, the company rebranded with its killer domain name Destruction.com to better describe its services and communicate a leading position in the industry.

"Most people like to know right away, "Who are you and what do you do?" This rebrand accomplishes that."

- Rick Carey, the Founder of Destruction



MyTeksi.com - GrabTaxi.com - Grab.com

MyTeksi, the taxi-hailing app launched in 2012 rebranded in January 29, 2016 and is now simply known as Grab. Grab has unified their services GrabTaxi, private car services GrabCar, motorcycle taxis GrabBike, social carpooling GrabHitch and last mile delivery GrabExpress into one platform.

The startup upgraded from GrabTaxi.com to the exact brand match domain name Grab.com. Prior to the upgrade they were also using the domain Grab.co. Grab.com was used by a gaming company which is now found on GrabGames.com.

"We've grown over the years — and we're now much more than a taxi app. This new brand is an important evolution that represents our goal to outserve our customers"

- Anthony Tan, CEO and co-founder, Grab

Palo Alto Delivery - DoorDash.com

DoorDash Inc. is a San Francisco-based on-demand prepared food delivery service founded in 2013 by Stanford students Tony Xu, Stanley Tang, Andy Fang and Evan Moore. It first launched as Palo Alto Delivery in January 2013, and officially changed its name to DoorDash in June 2013, on the matching DoorDash.Com domain.

« When we first started, we were trying to solve our own problem of getting food delivered. But soon, it grew quickly within the Stanford community and beyond. » shared the team.

In 2019 DoorDash was involved in a legal battle over a business that had registered the DoorDash.com.au domain. The case was settled in private and the domain now forwards to their main website.

EsharesInc.com - Carta.com

The startup started with the domain name eSharesInc.com. By 2017 the company was a well known leader in its field and raised \$67 Million. They tried and didn't manage to get their exact brand match eshares.com. That lead to the decision to go for a complete rebrand and avoid future confusion and security risks.

"We are changing our name because we do not own « eshares.com ». A complete rebrand is required to avoid confusion and security risks in the future. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise because our mission has grown into something larger than cap table management. " - announced CEO Henry Ward in a message to clients.

The company rebranded to Carta in 2017 and on top of being short and memorable, their new names is more open to expansion, given they now offer a lot more than electronic issuance of shares.

Mainstream Motors - Avera Automotive - Rivian.com

Founded in 2009 as Mainstream Motors, Rivian didn't start out as the same truck-focused company we know. The name change from Mainstream Motors to Avera Automotive follows a federal lawsuit filed in Florida Middle District Court by South Korean auto giant Hyundai Motor Co.

In November 2010, Hyundai claimed the name "Avera" -- an amalgamation of the words "America," "verde" (the Spanish word for green) and "terra" -- sounded too similar to one of its popular sedans, the Azera. The suit demanded that the Rockledge company stop using Avera and sought unspecified monetary damages. The company finally settled on Rivian and acquired the exact brand match domain name Rivian.com.

"We selected a powerful, timeless name that illustrates who we are as a company, how we blend with the natural environment and what we seek to do within the industry."

- CEO R.J. Scaringe

Envisionit e-pay - Truzo.com

In preparation for its global expansion, South African online escrow payments startup Envisionit e-Pay rebranded to Truzo in October 2019. The name is derived from the words TRUST ZONE and the startup secured the exact brand match domain name Truzo.com.

“In a fast-changing payments industry the company needed to further differentiate its service offering to ensure a more efficient multi-currency platform and enhance its brand positioning to better reflect its global ambitions,”

- Founder and Managing Director, Terence Naidu.



Verifly.com - Thimble.com

Founded in 2016 with the mission to offer insurance to drone pilots, Verifly's rebrand into Thimble came as the company responded to customer demand for more insurance options. The company later expanded its product range and announced its new name – Thimble. Smartly, the startup secured the exact brand match domain name Thimble(.com) from the start to enhance wider possibilities for expansion and growth.

“It became clear that we were becoming much bigger, the opportunity was much bigger and we needed a name that basically reflected how big this could be—how iconic—not just for one type of business but every type of small business,”

- Founder and CEO Jay Bregman explained to Carrier Management

Foodibay.com - Zomato.com

Foodiebay.com, a website that posted hundreds of restaurant menus, reviews of eating joints and recommendations, rebranded to Zomato.com in the wake of the company moving beyond the food category. If you are wondering what the name Zomato means, it's just a word that rhymes with tomato! They also considered the name Forkwise.

“Zomato.com, the domain name was \$10,000. And Forkwise.com was \$10... So, I mean, that was a big deal for us like, how do we spend \$10,000 out of the million dollars that we just raised!” As a result, Goyal and his team were leaning toward choosing Forkwise - but that’s when Raghuvanshi intervened and made his voice heard. “He was quite pissed at us for dropping Zomato.com, which is such a cool domain name, and wanting to buy Forkwise.com,” Goyal remembers. “He actually offered to buy it for us personally! And then, I was like, if you have that much confidence on this to buy it personally, we will buy it ourselves, so, don’t worry about it. And that’s how we bought Zomato.com.”

“We saw that if we wanted to touch broader horizons then the name “Foodiebay” wasn’t going to be the best option since it might restrict our perception as just a food website. And right now was the time to reflect deeply and think about what we should be christened as especially since we are going to invest heavily in marketing the brand.”

DoorBot.com - Ring.com

After appearing on Shark Tank in 2013 (and failing to attract an investment from the Sharks), DoorBot raised \$5.5 Million in funding and rebranded to Ring in October 2014.

“The first was that we felt doorbot was a bit too “techie” for the home as we became more of a mainstream product/brand and we also wanted a name that would grow with us and fit the mission.” Jamie Siminoff, the founder of smart home and home security company Ring
The company secured the exact brand match domain name Ring.com

Founder Jamie Siminoff paid \$1 million for the domain “If you want to be a player in the market,” he said, “you have to look like one.”

« When we talk to a partner and give them an email address, name@ring.com, they always say
« wow. »» he shares.

Ploom.com - PaxLabs.com - Juul.com

The company was founded by James Monsees and Adam Bowen in 2007 under the name Ploom. Japan Tobacco International acquired Ploom's ModelTwo, including the intellectual property associated with the device and its pods. As part of the transaction, Bowen and Monsees bought back JTI's stake in their company, and renamed it to Pax Labs.

In 2015 Juul e-cigarettes launched as a product and it spun into a separate company in 2017. Juul Labs acquired the exact brand match domain Juul.com, after running on JuulLabs.com / JuulVapor.com before the upgrade.



Matchbox app - Tinder.com

Tinder launched in 2012 in the startup incubator Hatch Labs. The business was initially named Matchbox before introducing a catchier name which instantly became a hit. Hatch Labs, who already owned the popular dating site Match.com, rebranded the app as Tinder – a play on the original Matchbox name.

“We still liked that sort of fire theme, so actually we looked through a dictionary, a thesaurus, something like that, looking for fire-related words. Eventually settling on Tinder, which Merriam Webster defines as, “dry material (such as wood or grass) that burns easily and can be used to start a fire.”

Worst case, “people will either get it, and they’ll say, ‘Oh — tinder: fire,’ or they don’t get it and they think it’s some clever misspelling of the word ‘tender,’”

- co-founder Jonathan Badeen

Zimride.com - Lyft.com

Zimride, an American rideshare program matching inter-city drivers and passengers through private social networks, launched in 2007. In 2012 they launched the Lyft app, for intra-city rides. Lyft rapidly grew and soon became the main focus of the company.

In May 2013, the company officially changed its name from Zimride to Lyft and shared the Zimride service to Enterprise Holdings. The change from Zimride to Lyft was the result of a hackaton that sought a means of daily engagement with its users, instead of once or twice a year. The startup acquired the exact brand match domain name Lyft.com

“When we first were talking it over, we actually were going to call it Zimride Instant. Luckily we took a second and stepped back and changed the branding.”

- Logan Green, the co-founder and CEO of Lyft

Hasoffers.com - Tune.com

The first TUNE product was launched in 2009. It was called HasOffers because it was a white label solution that allowed anyone to manage their own offers for affiliates and partners to promote.

HasOffers rebranded to Tune in July 2017. When you visit their homepage you will see their partner marketing platform has both networks and advertisers under one brand, TUNE. The company secured the exact brand match domain name Tune.com.

“We chose Tune because it resonates perfectly with what we help marketers do across our products. Maybe even more importantly, we wanted something that would be really fun and creative for our people and our clients.” - Tune CEO Peter Hamilton

Hamilton also shared the brand wanted to avoid names that used the words “ad” or “app.”

Ellebox.com – Blume.com

Originally launched in Toronto by sisters Taran and Bunny Ghatrora, Ellebox was selling third party discovery products as a subscription. Soon the business grew and the sisters decided to launch their own brand and better match their audience's needs. Blume was born and the business re-branded in early 2018.

“Our new name is Blume! For growth. And a nod to one of our favorite childhood authors, Judy Blume, who so beautifully captured the struggles and beauties of the transition to adolescence.”

“We used to be called Ellebox, and we didn't have any of our own products. We sent a bundle, monthly, featuring third-party discovery products, the way Birchbox does. But we decided to vertically integrate and have our own products and focus more on reaching Generation Z. Armando had advised us that all successful companies have a very unique, specific point of view. And that tied in with our commitment to Gen Z and their shopping habits.” - Taran Ghatrora, CEO & Co-Founder at Blume

They started with the domain name MeetBlume (.)com and later on acquired the matching Blume.com

eChromics.com - Soladigm.com – View.com

The company was founded in April 2007 by Paul Nguyen and Mike Scobey as eChromics. It was renamed to Soladigm in October 2007. In November 2012 Soladigm rebranded again View, Inc.

The business was using the domain name ViewGlass.com before upgrading to View.com (owned and operated by a DVD company in New York).

“I am proud of the View team for the innovative spirit and dedication they have shown in achieving this important milestone. We are ready to continue to execute on the vision to see wide spread use of dynamic glass in buildings.”

- Dr. Rao Mulpuri, CEO of View, Inc.

Mondo.com – Monzo.com

In August 2016, London banking startup Mondo announced that it is changing its name to Monzo after an unnamed company challenged Mondo's trademark. It agreed with the company in the dispute that a change of name would end the legal challenge, and called on Mondo customers to suggest names beginning with "M." In 48 hours, the company received 12,560 suggestions for its new name. The name Monzo clearly was the winner.

"Of course, it's not a million miles away from what we already had. It's like Mondo, but better", admits Monzo's chief executive Tom Blomfield.

Monzo acquired the domain name Monzo.com upgrading from getmonzo.co.uk. Now it's one of Europe's hottest neobank startups.

Hyperware.com - Brave.com

Originally incorporated in Delaware as Hyperware Labs, Inc in 2015, they later changed their name to Brave.

“Brave was one of the first names we considered. But we also considered others: Gladiator, Dynamo, Superware. We couldn't come up with anything else we liked better. We decided to go with it. We did almost use "Zura" though, which is Sanskrit for Brave. We'd have used this name if we couldn't register the company name or a domain for Brave.”

The company wanted Brave.com, but it had been in use for 17 years by a "nuclear polka" band founded in 1979 named Brave Combo. At the time, the Domain name Brave.com was being used and redirected to brave.com/bo. Before contacting them, Brave co-founder acquired the domain name BraveCombo.com and asked if they'd consider selling brave.com in exchange for bravecombo.com and a fair price. After some months of negotiating the parties agreed on an undisclosed sum for the transaction, that was to be paid half up front, and the other half 6 months later.

Elance.com - Elance-oDesk – Upwork.com

Well-known freelancer marketplace actually began with the name Elance in 1999, when the web first enabled us to work beyond our local vicinities. The company was named after a Harvard Business Review article titled The Dawn of the E-Lance Economy. The idea behind both, the company and the article, is that employees were moving toward electronically-driven freelance work, essentially becoming electronically connected freelancers—e-lancers.

Elance and oDesk grew quite successfully as separate entities until 2013 when the two sites drew up a merger on December 18 to create Elance-oDesk. With the launch of Upwork, the oDesk platform was upgraded and rebranded and the company announced that the Elance platform would be phased out within a couple of years, resulting in a single freelance marketplace called Upwork.

“The word work can sound like a "downer". Projects offered on the platform, are different. It’s really awesome work-better work than you could find locally.” Stephane Kasriel | CEO, Upwork

“With an exciting and limitless future in mind, we chose Upwork to better convey our vision and represent our current and future community. It’s a name that inspires us and we hope it will inspire you as well.”

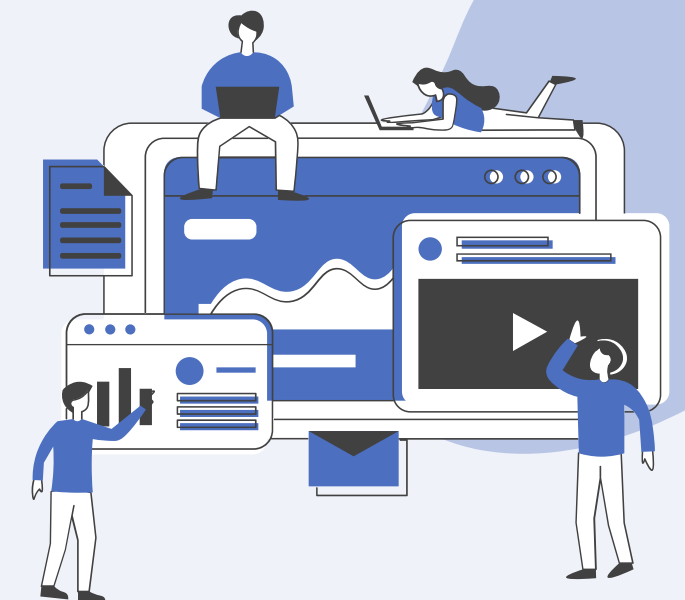
- Stephane Kasriel | CEO, Upwork

Classivivity.com – ClassPass.com

In 2014 Classtivity, a monthly gym-like membership for people who wanted to get in shape with a different workout every time, was officially rebranded to the name of their product that was proving most successful: ClassPass.

The company has both Classtivity.com (redirects to Classpass.com) and Classpass.com (acquired in August 2019) domain names.

Along with Juul this is an example of how sometimes a single product can reshape entirely a business idea and a brand.



Thank you for reading this far. We hope the above will help you in the process of creating and growing a successful brand. See you in Part 2, where we will look at brands who chose short and descriptive names.

