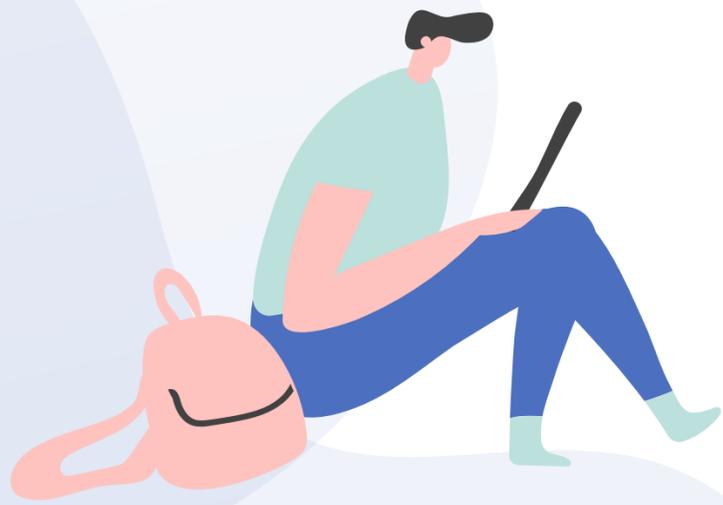


A DECADE IN DOMAINS

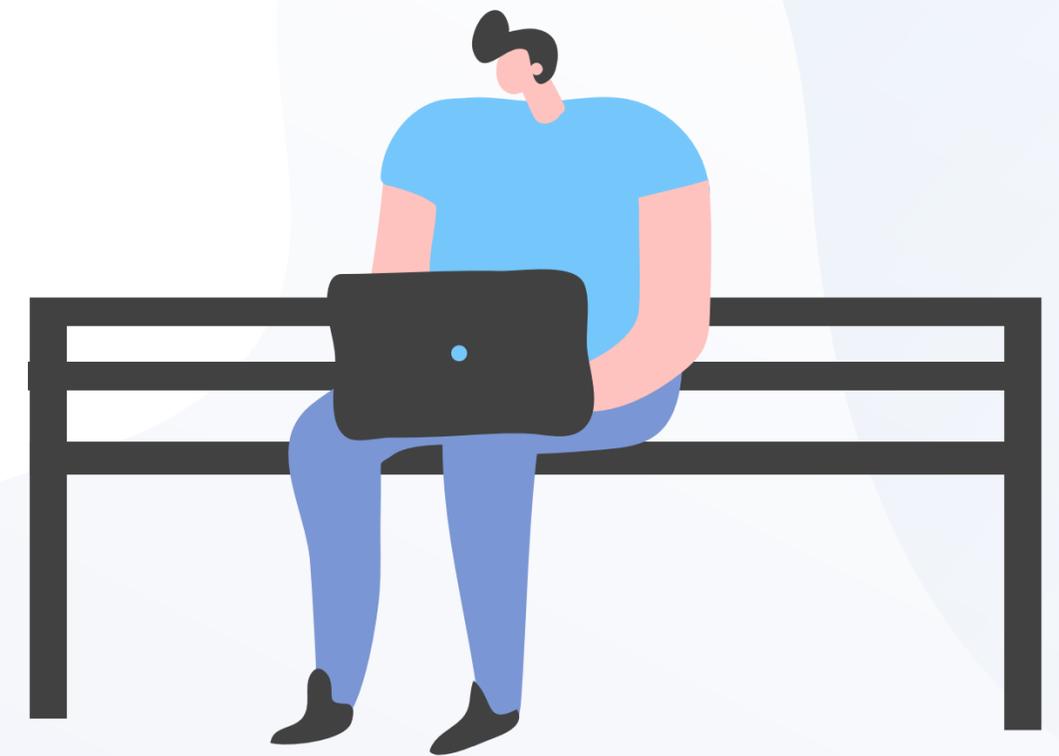
2010-2020

Presented by MarkUpgrade

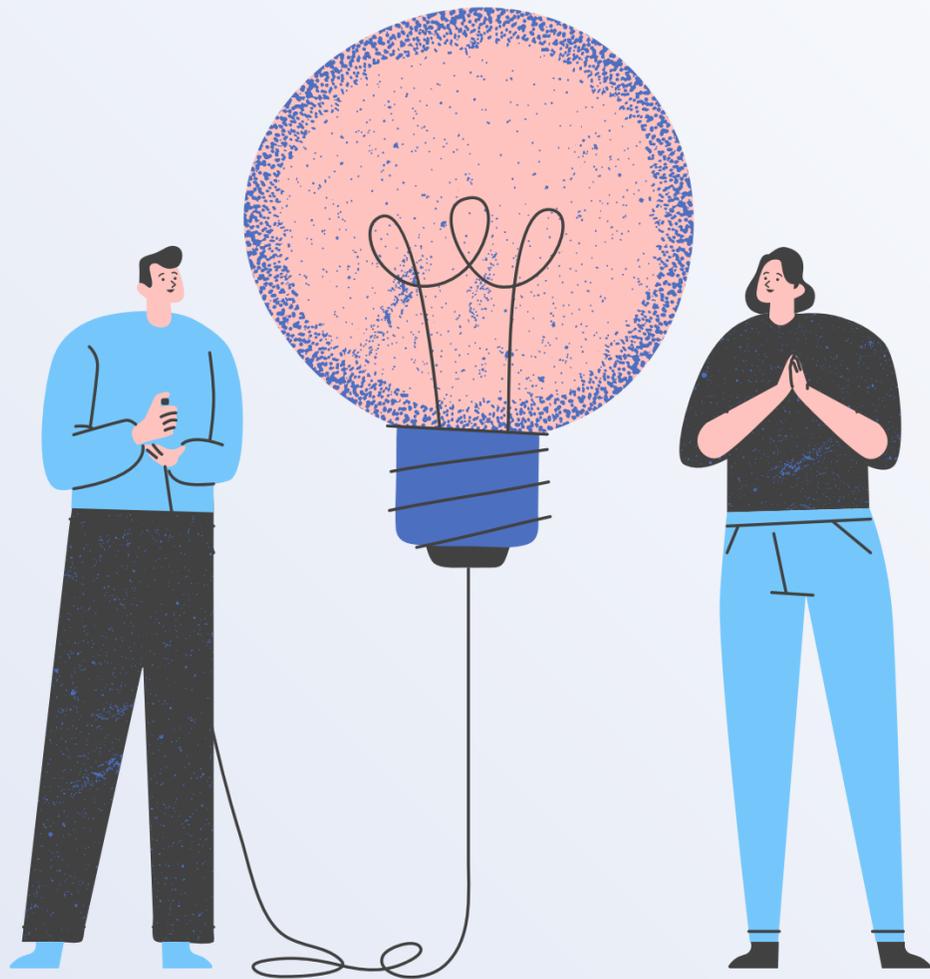


Part 2

In the first part of our research we covered brands who simplified their names and those who went for a complete rebrand. Next we will have a look at businesses who picked short and descriptive names.



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

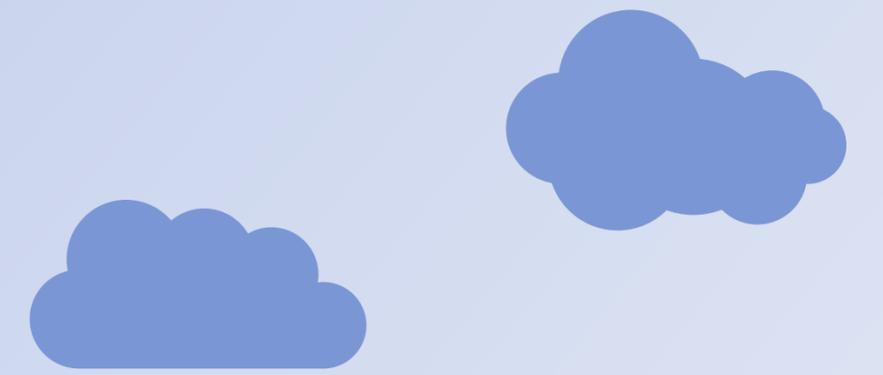
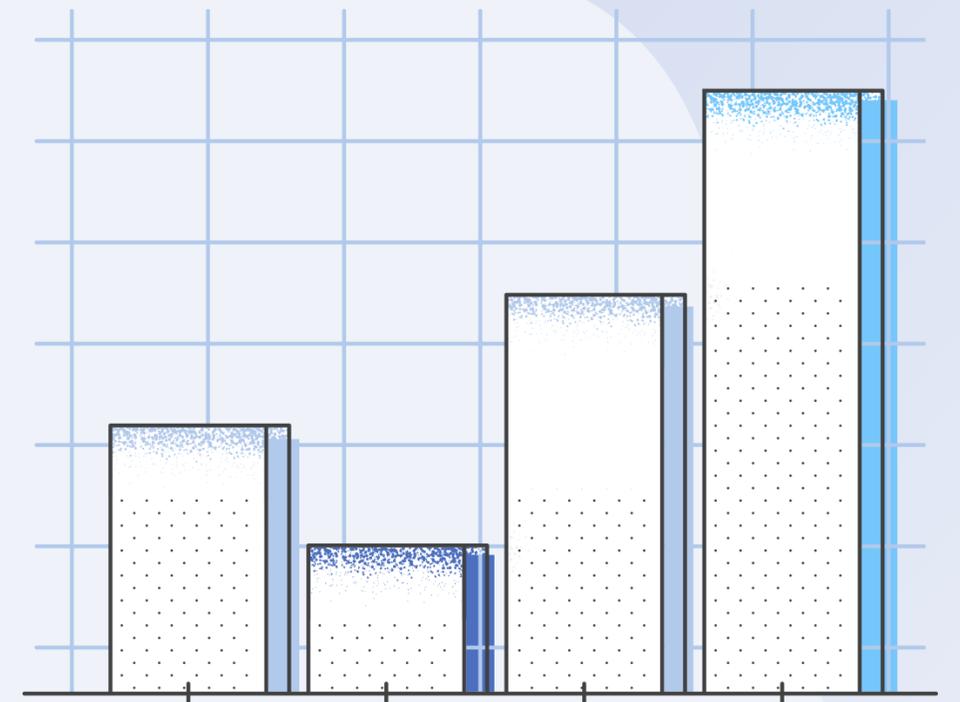
8 Direct to consumer brands that shine

9 Blockchain and AI brands

Short and sweet: brands with short names

One word names for business are some of the quickest and simplest ways to have a lasting impact on your target audience, without leaving them tongue-tied.

Rather than trying to describe the complex nature of your company in a handful of combined words, you refine your entire business essence down to a single word. It dictates how customers will think and feel about your company from day one.



Names have power.

- Rick Riordan, The Lightning Thief -

Stripe.com

Irish entrepreneur brothers John and Patrick Collison founded Stripe in 2010, initially using the name /Dev/Payments. As you can imagine it caused some problems.

“(The name) is horrendous to say. Plus, most schemas don’t allow slashes in company names. So we decided we needed to change it.” John and Patrick Collison, Founders of Stripe

“However, as it turned out, there were a few problems with the name “/dev/payments”. First of all, the state of Delaware doesn't allow leading slashes in corporate names (yes, it does allow slashes in other positions). So we ended up officially incorporating as the indecipherable SLASHDEVSLASHFINANCE (we saw ourselves as building financial infrastructure for the internet and didn't want to be limited to payments).

We started getting mail addressed to SLASHDEV/SLASHFINANCE, and we saw other similarly crazy misparses of the name.

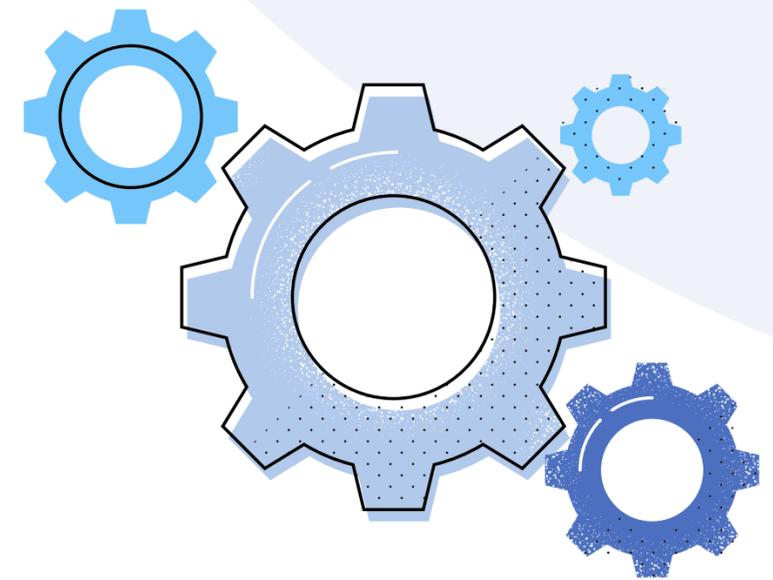
Secondly, the name looked pretty ridiculous to anyone who didn't see the association with device nodes and how easy it is to write to them. Imagine being in talks with a very serious banker from a very serious bank and then telling them you worked at “Slash Dev Slash Finance”. It's not a great way to build trust.

Thirdly, Amazon has a product called Amazon DevPay. It's a similar product in a similar — well, almost identical — space. The names were all-too-similar, and we didn't want to even have to worry about user confusion, much less potential trademark issues.” - Greg Brockman, former CTO @ Stripe

Names like PayStack and PayDemon were on the list but eventually they started to look any names they could think of and seeing what was present on the domain. Stripe.com had a lukewarm reception at first, but over time it seemed to have emotion and importantly was not associated with any other specific company or brand.

The domain owner was an MIT alumni and the subsequent sale was relatively smooth. The exact price of the domain is undisclosed, though Patrick Collison shared on Quora that « it was less than you might think. ».

In June of 2011, roughly 18-months after the company began, the first designer joined the team and synced the brand and messaging which lives throughout their product and website.



OnCarrot.com -Carrot.com

Carrot has a fun story about how its name was chosen. “I pulled back and said, okay, what should a website be for a small business?” CEO Trevor Mauch told Domain Name Wire. “It shouldn’t be a brochure. It shouldn’t be just something they land on to get information...it should be a carrot, right? It should be a customer carrot. It should be something that you dangle in front of them and it attracts them. They bite it.”

The business launched on the domain name OnCarrot.com as the exact brand match was already registered.

Mauch knew this domain wasn’t ideal. Over time, he grew tired of explaining his email address to customers. Then a big gut check happened at a conference the company sponsored. “50% of the people that were [at the conference] came up to us and said, ‘We love Oncarrot. We absolutely love OnCarrot.’”

Carrot upgraded its domain name from OnCarrot.com to the shorter and more intuitive Carrot.com in April 2019, they paid \$600,000 for the domain.

“For us, our domain name was fine. It would have continued to do what it needed to do. But it didn’t further cement our brand. It actually distracted from it and made it harder for people to find us.”

Close.io - Close.com

Steli Efti, CEO and cofounder of Close, started in 2012 with his first company called Elastic Sales. The company was essentially a paid R&D project that produced a high growth sales SaaS product (Close). By 2014, the software was bigger than their services company, so they decided to shut down Elastic Sales and focus on building up the new venture. The company started off with the domain name Close.io before acquiring the exact brand match domain name Close.com in April 2019.

“Right off the bat when we got started in 2013, we of course wanted to own the close.com domain name. Who wouldn't? However, the domain wasn't available at the time, as it was being used by another startup just getting off the ground and raising a healthy investment round in the social networking space.”

”As the years went on and our customer base grew, we noticed that more people were referring to us as “Close,” rather than “Close-dot-I-O” or “Close-I-O” and we'd been adopting that name internally as well. ”

”Now that we've reached a level of maturity and stability in the CRM space, we decided it was finally time to invest in acquiring the .com domain—in part to reconcile that disconnect between calling ourselves Close internally and “Close-dot-I-O” externally. ”

”We wanted something common, people will recognize it, they understand it, they can say it. ” - Steli Efti

LairdTech.com - Laird.com

Laird's history goes back almost 200 years and the business has evolved over that time into the global engineering company we know today. The company was founded by John Laird in 1824 as Birkenhead Ironworks in Liverpool. In 1903 it merged with Charles Cammell & Company Limited and rebranded to Cammell Laird. After the nationalization of ship building in 1977, the company moved to security products and later on, in 1990 to electronics.

By 2008 the company has changed name to Laird Group PLC and then to Laird PLC. Advent International, a private equity firm, acquired the business in 2018. At the time they were operating on the domains LairdTech.com and Laird-plc.com. Since then, the company has been divided into independent products - Laird Connectivity, Laird Performance Materials and Laird Thermal Systems. In march 2019, Laird Technologies acquired the exact brand match domain name laird.com, unifying its brand and establishing a global position.

JoustBank.com - Joust.com

Although its name was Joust from the beginning, this innovative thought leader and futurist in the banking industry didn't start on the domain name Joust.com. Initially you could find them on JoustBank.com.

CEO Lamine Zarrad shares the origins of the brand name:

"Freelance professionals are our key demographic, so we looked into the history of the word "freelance." Though the term "free lances" first showed up in Ivanhoe, it refers to a real phenomenon of unaffiliated medieval soldiers. From there we got to "Joust." And, well, the URL for "HiredGun," was already taken. (just kidding) In addition to the lance concept, the shield worked well for us because PayArmour, our anchor product, serves to protect freelancers."

"We were always interested in the Joust.com domain. We located the owner and came to an arrangement. Having this Joust.com domain made us feel that our branding was complete. It's simple and easy to remember."

The company acquired their exact brand match domain name Joust.com in 2018.

SlackHQ.com - Slack.com

Slack began as an internal tool for Stewart Butterfield's company Tiny Speck during the development of Glitch, an online game. Launched in August 2013, the name was explained in a tweet by Stewart in 2016 as an acronym that stands for "Searchable Log of All Conversation and Knowledge."

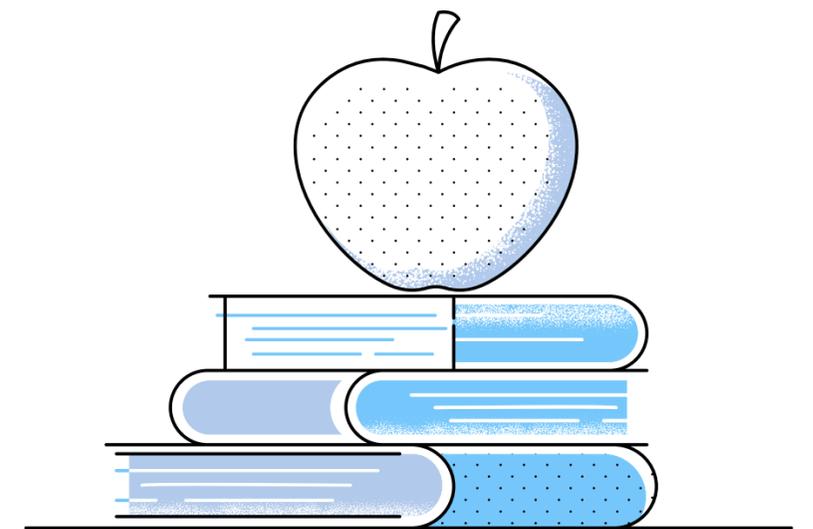
Communications app acquired the exact brand match domain Slack.com back in 2013 as an upgrade to SlackHQ.com which they were using at the time. The acquisition price was shared later on in a Quora post - \$60,000, a great deal for such a short memorable name!



JoinChief.com - Chief.com

As for how they got the name Chief, Carolyn Childers, Co-Founder and CEO of Chief says, “It was so funny to hear how many people were like, ‘Ah, it kinda feels masculine, don’t you think?’ And we thought it was really fun to lean into that and take ownership of it in a really interesting way.”

Chief, a private network and club for women executives, had been using the domain name JoinChief.com before upgrading to the exact brand match domain chief.com. By the end of 2019 the company raised \$25 million in funding over two rounds.



Wish.com

Wish, an online e-commerce platform, was started by Piotr Szulczewski, a former Google engineer, as a software company called ContextLogic. In May 2011, Szulczewski invited college friend Danny Zhang to relaunch the company as Wish.

Wish gets its name from the company's original business model: it started as a wish-list. By using the app, users could make a wish-list of the products they wanted to have. They could then order these products on other websites, enabling Wish to earn money with affiliate links. In 2013, Wish became an online retailer itself after it asked merchants to host their products directly in the Wish app. The company has the exact brand match domain name Wish.com.

Wish was the most downloaded shopping app worldwide in 2018 and is now the third-biggest e-commerce marketplace in the U.S. by sales.

ModeAnalytics.com - Mode.com

Mode, a collaborative data platform, was founded in 2013 by Derek Steer, Benn Stancil, and Josh Ferguson. The company provides online tools for analyzing data in real time.

The company launched on ModeAnalytics.com and acquired the exact brand match Mode.com domain name in 2018. The name was previously used for a social platform that closed in 2016.



SumoMe.com - Sumo.com

Online marketing technology company SumoMe rebranded to Sumo in February 2017. The company acquired the exact brand match domain name Sumo.com upgrading from SumoMe.com. Noah Kagan, Co-Founder of sumo.com was very open that the company invested \$1,500,000 to get the domain and even got some good publicity in major entrepreneur publications on the topic.

“Anyone can have a two or three word name. But one word names? They carry more prestige. Just ask Madonna.” shared Noah.

In his interview with Michael Cyger on DomainSherpa, Kagan shared that acquiring the four letter word, Sumo.com wasn't exactly an overnight success. Before leading with the vision of building something ultra big, he came up with the name Softwaresteal.com but tossed it because sending the first impression of stealing software probably wasn't the best route to successful partnerships and customer loyalty.

He then came up with the name Softwaretaco.com – software suggests tech and taco portrays ingredients (products and services) you need to make something people can't resist. The brand name was dropped because “software” dated the company and was too generic. He then started brainstorming words with a friend at a bar that contained the word app (keep in mind this was in 2010) and crafted names like AppMonster, AppChief, which eventually lead to AppSumo.

He later purchased SumoMe.com for his spin-off business which helps entrepreneurs automate their site growth. And it wasn't until seven years of persistence that Noah acquired the domain Sumo.com

„Several sites popped up after us in the SaaS space that utilized “sumo” in their name. We were the original and now we are positioned as the original.”

PostmarkApp.com - Postmark.com

Postmark is a transactional email delivery provider founded in 2010 by the wilddbit.com team. They launched on the PostmarkApp.com domain name. The company upgraded its domain name to the exact brand name Postmark.com in December 2019.



GoToKeep.com - Keep.com

Scott P. Kurnit, a serial entrepreneur and angel investor in media and technology, founded AdKeeper.com in early 2010. He is the Chairman & CEO of KeepHoldings.com, the parent company of Keep.com (which allows keeping, discussion and sharing of favorite products). In early 2012, according to DomainIQ's WHOIS history, Keep Holdings upgraded its domain name from GoToKeep.com to the exact brand match domain Keep.com.

Keep Holdings used Keep.com as a discovery tool for the latest trends in fashion, and developed a large following around the name. Keep has raised \$174 million in funding since 2015.

Bref.com

Brex, the fintech business that's taken the startup world by storm, was founded by Henrique Dubugras and Pedro Franceschi on January 3, 2017. The guys had just given up their augmented reality startup in Y Combinator and wondering what to do next when they saw their batch mates struggling to get even the most basic corporate credit cards — and in a lot of cases, having to guarantee those cards themselves. That's how the idea of Brex was born.

The brand name Brex was strategically chosen. Pedro and Henrique wanted something that was simple and easy to remember, so they turned to a name-generating website to find what worked best.

The domain brex.com was sold back in 2007 for \$3,100 on an auction. Since then it changed hands twice and was eventually acquired by the current Brex team for undisclosed amount. In June 2019, Brex's total equity funding was \$315 million, with a valuation of \$2.6 billion — a considerable growth trajectory for a company founded in 2017

Loon.co - Loon.com

Project Loon began as a research and development project by X (formerly Google X). It was officially announced as a Google project on June 14, 2013. The project is appropriately named Project Loon, partially because it involves balloons and partially because it sounds looney.

The project spun out into a separate company in July 2018. In January 2019, Google acquired the exact brand match domain name Loon.com, upgrading from Loon.co. The 30 years old domain seems to have been belong to someone with a looney sense of humor before that, see this screenshot from how the site looked back in 2006!

Welcome to loon.com. Now go home.

We at Loon are wondering: is humor impairment a plague that is sweeping the face of the planet? In an effort to break up the monotony of the endless "this site is under construction" pages one encounters, we opted for the more succinct "now go home" message. It seems to offend people with accounts at a certain alleged ISP who, for unknowable reasons, are visiting this page. So for all of you humor-impaired folks: This site is **NOT** under construction. What you see is pretty much what you get. Have a happy day.

If you found this page while you were looking for some other site (such as [Loon Mountain](#)), please check the [links](#) area. If what you're looking for isn't there, we will be happy to consider adding a link to that site from this page if you just [drop us a line](#).

Looking for any of these sites hosted by loon.com?

[Unofficial GNU3 FAQ Site](#)

[Ron Day Designs](#) fine woodworking

[The Overlook Estate Foundation](#)

[Freefall Improvisational Theater](#): Witness the creation of one-act plays. Moment to moment, scene by scene.

If you have trouble reaching any of the above sites, please [notify the webmaster](#)

Great.com

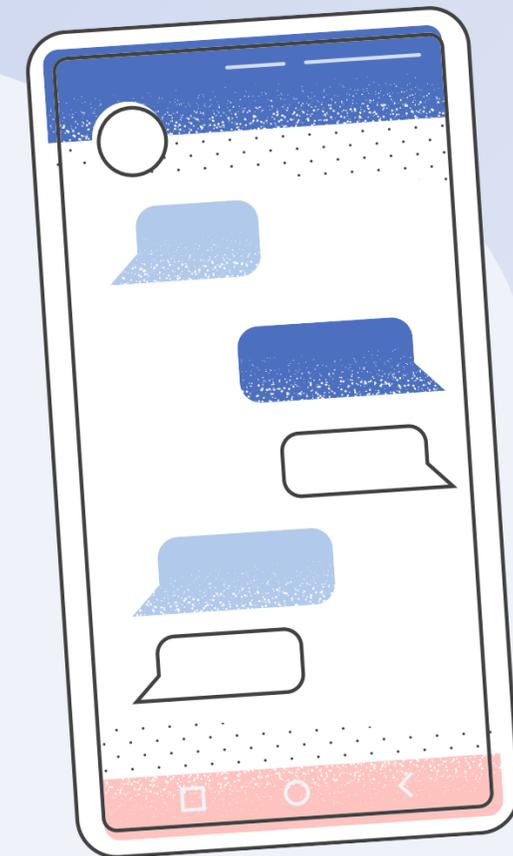
To get his "dream" domain Swedish entrepreneur Erik Bergman invested \$900,000 to outbid all competitors for Great.com in the NameJet/RightOfTheDot live domain auction held at the 2018 NamesCon conference in Las Vegas. The young entrepreneur acquired the domain name to develop a commercial endeavor with the goal of giving away all of the proceeds to charitable causes.

"When it came to domain names it first started out with actual websites - small affiliate sites in various segments. At first, I was only interested in exact match domains for all the SEO benefits but later on it's been more about being able to build a big brand with it."

"I wanted something that can work in any industry, be a name that everyone can spell, have positive connections to and will remember. I had gone over tons of options but after I came up with Great.com I just couldn't let that idea go." - shares Erik.

Startups choosing simple words that describe their businesses

Descriptive brand names are those that clearly describe the product or service the company offers - think of Pizza Hut or SkillShare for example. Descriptive names can be great for SEO and make communicating what you do so much quicker. Let's see what businesses picked descriptive names for their brands.



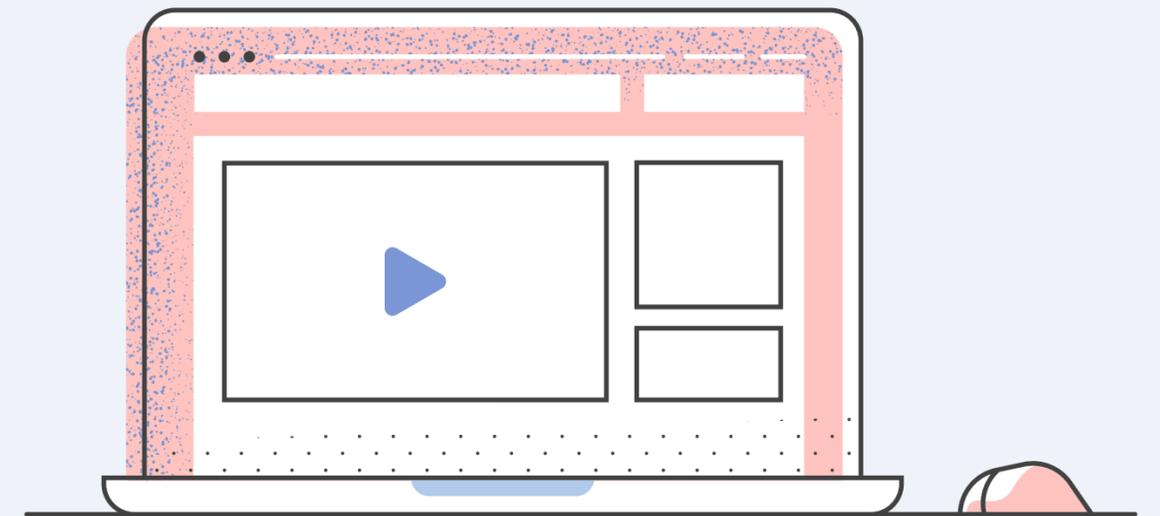
Mystification is simple; clarity is
the hardest thing of all.

- Julian Barnes, Flaubert's Parrot -

AllMyLinks.com - Links.com

In June 2019, AllMyLinks, a service that helps followers find all of your social media accounts, upgraded its domain name from AllMyLinks.com to the shorter and simpler domain name Links.com.

The name was acquired via Sedo for the fixed price of €700,000 (around \$800,000 USD at the time), making it Sedo's highest fixed price sale up to date. Links have kept the AllMyLinks logo and branding.



Teamworkpm.net - Teamwork.com

Teamwork is founded by Peter Coppinger and Dan Mackey in 2007. In October 2007, they launched Teamwork Project Manager, nicknamed TeamworkPM. In March 2015, they rebranded to Teamwork Projects.

In 2014, after two years of negotiations, Teamwork bought the domain name 'Teamwork' for US\$675,000 (€500,000). It was one of the most expensive domain names ever purchased by an Irish company.

“When it came time to pick a domain name, unfortunately the guy who owned Teamwork.com wanted \$10 million, which was a little bit outside our \$100 budget. So, in the end, we went with a terrible domain name – “teamworkpm.net”. Could it be worse?” shared Peter Coppinger on the company blog.

« The company recouped its investment in a month and a half, and it makes customers think Teamwork is a huge multinational » says Donal Cahalane, VP of Growth and Marketing.

GetButcherBox.com - ButcherBox.com

ButcherBox was founded in 2015 with mission to change the way consumers shop for and purchase high-quality, humanely raised protein. The company upgraded its domain name from GetButcherBox.com to the exact brand match ButcherBox.com an year after launch.



GetRoom.com - Room.com

ROOM is a startup making room for people in the modern workplace through flexible and affordable solutions. Launched in May 2018 by serial entrepreneurs Brian Chen and Morten Meisner-Jensen, ROOM is backed by Slow Ventures, a leading venture capital firm that was one of the original investors in Casper.

The company launched on GetRoom.com and later on upgraded to the exact brand match Room.com

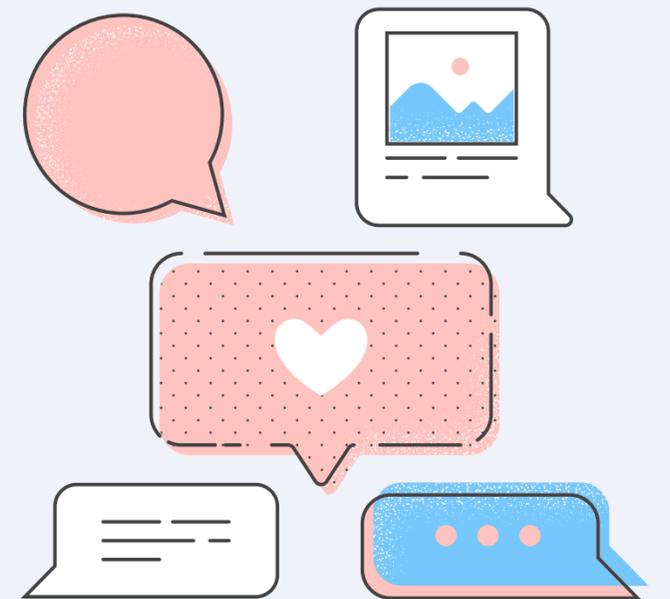
Brian Chen, co-founder and CEO of Room, said that the domain name was acquired using a 5-year payment plan. In July 2019, domain investor Michael Castello shared the sales price - \$1,500,000 USD in an interview with DNJournal, and added « Room.com will give them the kind of unforgettable one-word .com brand that so many growing companies are looking for today. »

Duolingo.com

Duolingo, a free language education platform, was founded in 2011.

According to Duolingo, the word Duolingo, "duo" means "two" and "lingo" means "languages". Two languages is fitting because when you're learning a language on Duolingo, you're practicing (and learning) two languages: your native language (common grammar mistakes you might make) and your target language (the language you want to learn, the basic foundations).

The company runs on the exact brand match domain name Duolingo.com and, according to Wikipedia, the app has over 300 million registered users across the world.



SickWeather.com

Founded in 2011, SickWeather is the world's only predictive, hyperlocal illness data platform.

“I wanted a name that expressed the idea of tracking illness like the weather, but I also didn’t want a name with the words “health” or “map” in it as those were heavily used in the industry, so I wanted something that stood out from the white noise of the marketplace. SickWeather was one of the options I came up with, and when I realized the TLDs were all available for it, then that was the final deciding factor — that I could acquire all the domains inexpensively.” - shared Graham Dodge, Co-founder and CEO of SickWeather.

The company started with the exact brand match domain name SickWeather.com. They also invested in the domain SickScore.com.

“It was important for us to acquire SickScore.com because SickScore is a trademark of ours that was being used with attribution by several of our clients, including The Weather Channel, who publicized that trademark more than our own company name, so we wanted to make sure anyone Googling that name would find us easily.” - Graham ads.

Sailo.co - Sailo.com

Sailo is a web and mobile marketplace that connects people who want to rent boats to charter companies and boat owners. Founded by former entrepreneurs and engineers from Silicon Valley, Sailo was the #1 boat rental and yacht charter platform.

“From playing around with sailing and sailor, “Sailo” was the winner as a friendly and memorable brand name. (...) We all feel, and our customers confirmed that it’s a great name, easy to recall and connect to, just like our team and our mission.” Adrian Gradinaru, Founder and CEO of Sailo

The company upgraded its domain name from Sailo.co to Sailo.com.

“At the time of our official launch, Sailo.com was not available. The domain was parked (it was bought, but it wasn’t used) and my plan was to keep an eye on it and buy it as soon as it becomes available. The .com extension gives the brand more credibility and it’s easier for people to remember so we started with Sailo.co and after about 1 year we acquired Sailo.com.”

-Adrian shares.

StoreWithNeighbor.com - Neighbor.com

Founded in 2017, Neighbor is a peer-to-peer storage company that connects homeowners online with people who need storage space.

“Essentially, the name comes from the fact that users on Neighbor.com store their items with their neighbors. We’ve always wanted to place the focus on the people that make up our community rather than the services. People naturally trust their neighbors; they strive to be good neighbors to each other.” Joseph Woodbury, CEO and founder at Neighbor.com

In 2018, the startup upgraded its domain name from StoreWithNeighbor.com to the exact brand match Neighbor.com.

“Our company has always been called “Neighbor,” so people would naturally type in Neighbor.com assuming we owned the domain. All of that direct traffic was lost. Making the switch eliminated that problem.”- shared Joseph

“The domain has also allowed us to more confidently put resources behind SEO. And there is certainly a higher degree of user trust. Each of these and more factors compound to increase traffic and decrease acquisition costs.”

MyPupJoy.com - PupJoy.com

In 2015, frustrated with a lack of options at big box retail and existing online delivery options, Bill Wilkins and Dustin McAdams realized dog parents deserved more. So they started their own company called PupJoy.

“My partner Bill and I wanted a brand name that highlighted what we stood for — creating happiness for dogs and their parents — and one that provided us with a broad umbrella with which to grow and expand the business. In the early days, we spend a lot of time exploring potential names. We always came back to the concept of “joy”... it just fit our fabric.”

“Most of our consumer-customers buy directly from our website and our commercial customers often engage with us online as well. Lots of our customers find us through referrals; however, a good SEO structure and content is very important to make it easy for folks to find us through search.”

Dustin McAdams, Founder and CEO of PupJoy.



The company used the domain name MyPupJoy.com prior to upgrading to the exact brand match domain PupJoy.com.

Investor.com

Investor.com is a consumer advocacy project launched in 2018 with the belief that transparency can help Americans make better decisions about who manages their wealth.

“When the opportunity came about to acquire Investor.com, they quickly fell aside. We knew we had a perfect brand.” Blain Reinkensmeyer, Managing Director at RMG

“We were already respected in the domain industry before investor.com due to past acquisitions such as StockBrokers.com (2011, \$185,000) and ForexBrokers.com (2016, \$150,000). That said, yes, Investor.com certainly had a positive effect on our reputation in the industry, especially given it is was our most significant acquisition to date, by far.” Blain Reinkensmeyer, Managing Director at RMG

PacketHost.net - Packet.net - Packet.com

Launched in 2014 by industry veterans, Packet empowers developer-driven companies to deploy physical infrastructure at global scale.

“We considered a lot of not very good names, but finally landed on Packet for a few reasons: it's easy to spell, easy to remember, and it is tied to the one thing you have to buy from a cloud provider (network services). In networking, data is transmitted in small packages called "packets".” Jacob Smith, Co-founder and CMO at Packet.

The startup started (very briefly) with the domain name PacketHost.net and then acquired Packet.net, which was its primary domain until 2018, when Packet acquired the exact brand match domain Packet.com.

“It certainly erases the negative impression that Enterprise users had when they tried to visit Packet.com before we owned it.” - explains his decision Jacob Smith.

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 3, where we will look at brands who chose personal names as brands and Generation Alpha of brands.

