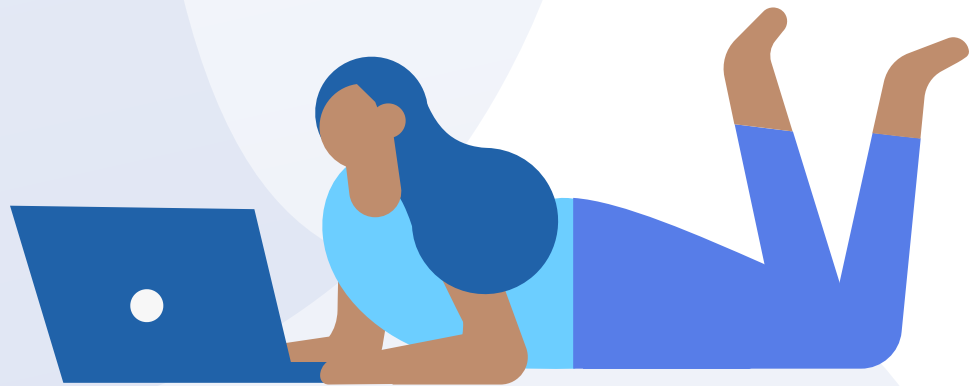


# A DECADE IN DOMAINS

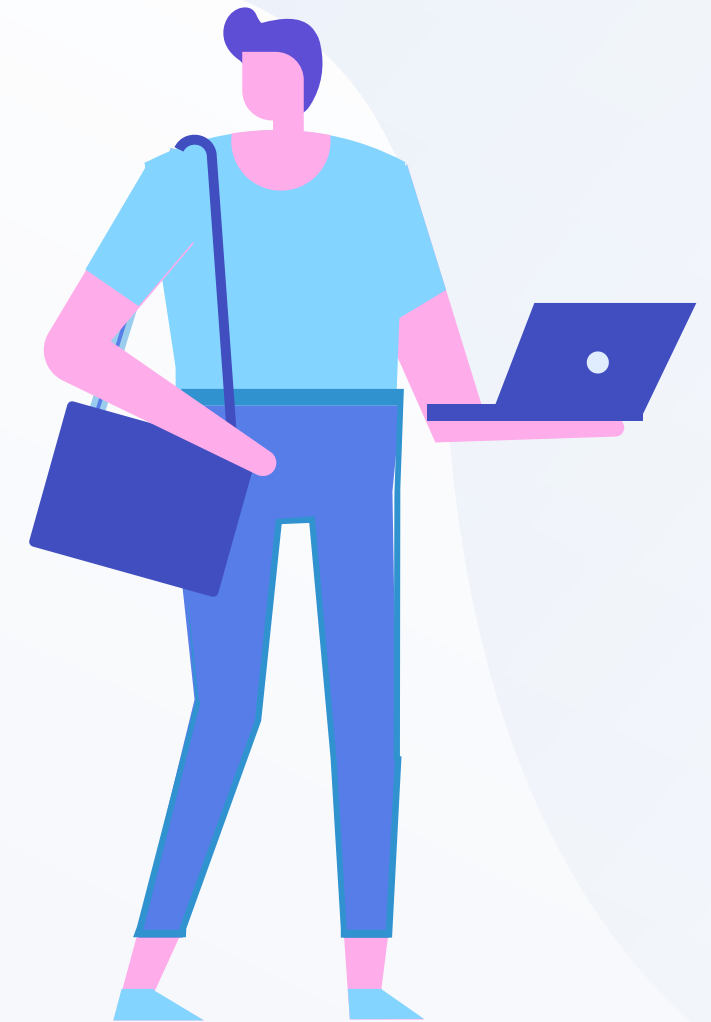
2010-2020

Presented by MarkUpgrade

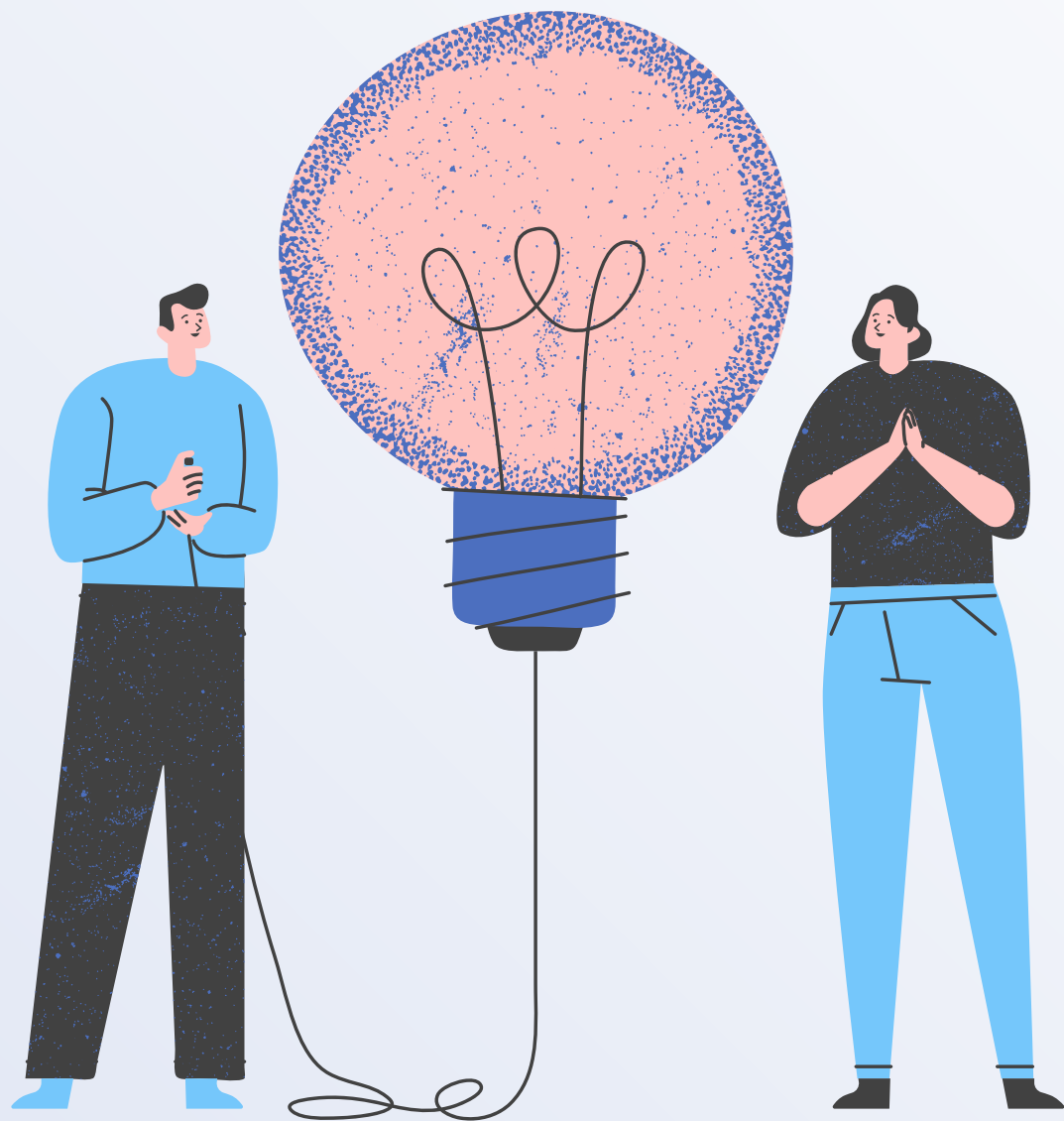


Part 3

In this part of our research we'll cover brands who chose a personal name as a brand name and the name choices of the Generation Alpha of brands - those who were born after 2010.



# 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

# Personal-name-as-brand-name trend

Over the last few years, a number of startups across a range of industries have named themselves relatively common human names — Casper, Oscar, Lola and Albert, to name a few.

The reason behind this trend is to build proximity and intimacy with consumers. In other words, these brands want to sound friendly and human and the shortest, simplest way to do that is with a human name.



“Giving it some grand name that made it sound like it’s been around for 500 years would make people feel more confident that they could put their money there.”

- Catchword co-founder Laurel Sutton -

## Alexa.com

Amazon Alexa, known simply as Alexa, is a virtual assistant AI technology developed by Amazon. Amazon developers chose the name Alexa because it has a hard consonant with the X, which helps it be recognized with higher precision. They have said the name is reminiscent of the Library of Alexandria, which is also used by Amazon Alexa Internet for the same reason. In 2015, the year after Amazon Alexa debuted, Alexa was the 32nd most popular female baby name in the US, bestowed upon 6,052 newborns that year, according to Social Security Administration data.

Amazon also controls the name commercially, having acquired Alexa Internet (operating on alexa.com), which ranks websites by traffic and provides marketing tools, in 1999, and which was also named to honor the Egyptian library, an important storehouse of knowledge in the ancient world.

## HiOscar.com

Founded in 2012, Oscar is a health insurance company that employs technology, design, and data to humanize health care. The company has the domain name HiOscar.com while their exact brand match Oscar.com belongs to the official website for the Oscars.



## TryDave.com - Dave.com

Founded in 2016, Dave is the highest-ranked personal financial management app in America and the fastest growing challenger bank.

“Most people turn to friends for financial help, especially when it's a small amount of money. Additionally, friends are supposed to be there to caution you if you are about to do something wrong. We wanted Dave to be seen as the person to turn to for help.”

“We settled on TryDave.com but as the launch became closer, we knew we could do better.” - Jason Wilk - Co-Founder and CEO of Dave

The fintech startup managed to acquire the ultra premium Dave.com domain name for their company in 2017, the same year they secured \$3M in funding and got backed by Mark Cuban.



## Lola.com

Lola.com, is the Agile Travel Management™ company that provides a super simple way to manage, book, and report on business travel.

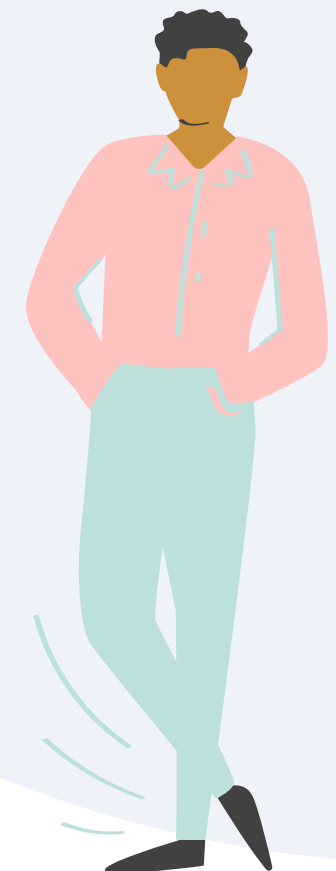
“Lola was actually our first choice for my last company, but we could not afford to buy the domain name lola.com, so we ended up with our second choice name, Kayak.com. But this time, I decided to go with my first choice. I love the word lola – I like how it sounds, and how it looks. It is also a portmanteau for longitude l’attitude.” Paul English, CEO of Lola.com

In May 2017, the company acquired the exact brand match domain name Lola.com in a \$550,000 deal.

## Albert.com

Founded in 2015, Albert is a financial service startup that offers a simple way to track your finances as well as personalized recommendations aimed at boosting your overall financial standing. The company acquired the exact brand match domain name Albert.com.

Up until October 2016 the domain name was registered to a French company called Go Albert FR, so we can speculate it was acquired by its current owners after that date, though it shows as « site not installed » on archive.org up to February 2018!



# Generation Alpha of Brands

To get some understanding of the brands born in the last decade there is no better place to look at than the market they are growing up to serve. The generation born in the 2010-2020 period is almost literally born with a phone in their hands. They have no fear of technology, to the contrary it is all natural to them. AI, voice, VR - that is all expected, not new to them and to earn and keep their attention and loyalty you need to really work hard.

Let's see how brands born this decade match that profile with their brand name choices.



“Loyalty is not won by being first. It is won by being best.”

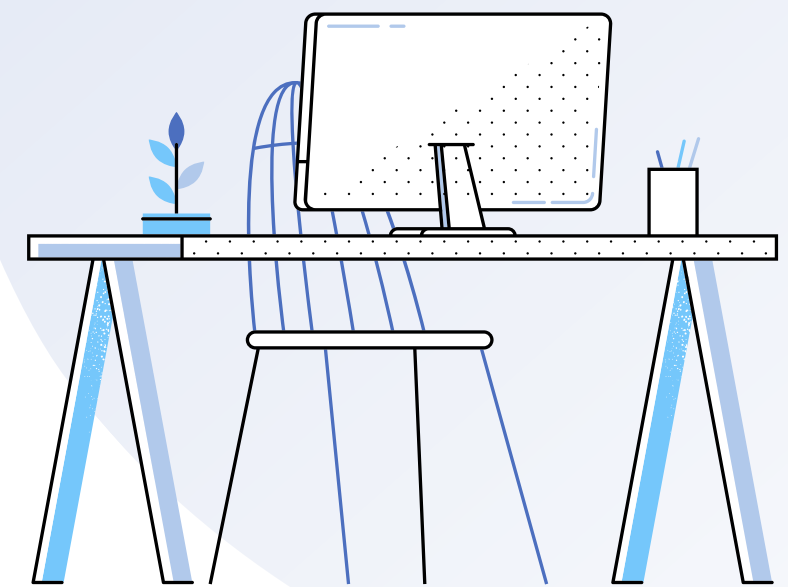
- Stefan Persson -

## Pinterest.com

Pinterest was founded by Ben Silbermann (a former Google employee), Evan Sharp, and Paul Sciarra, and launched in March 2010 as a closed beta. The site continued to grow via word of mouth for the next year.

By July 2011, Pinterest finally reached its 1 millionth unique visitor.

The name was first suggested by Silbermann's now-wife, while she was watching TV. The word is a combination of two concepts, "pinboard" or "pin" and "interest." The company acquired the exact brand match domain name Pinterest.com.



## Instagr.am - Instagram.com

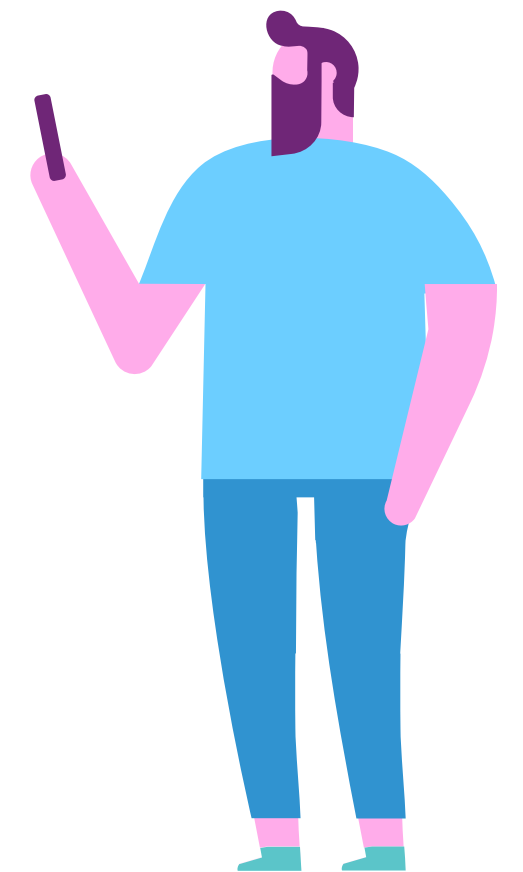
Instagram didn't start out as Instagram. It started out as Burbn, a mobile check-in app created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. Realizing that Burbn was too similar to Foursquare, Systrom and Krieger refocused their app on photo-sharing, which had become a popular feature among Burbn users. They renamed the app Instagram, a portmanteau of instant camera and telegram. Systrom wanted the name to be easy to pronounce, spell and follow the “right here, right now” concept.

At the end of its first week, Instagram had 100,000 users; after two months, it had 1 million registered users. It became a social-media phenomenon.

The brand initially launched on instagr.am domain, .am is Armenia's country code extension.

In January 2011 Instagram acquired the domain name instagram.com from Zhou Weiming for \$100,000. Later on the family of Zhou tried to sue Facebook, claiming the domain was sold by their daughter, who didn't have the authority to make that deal. Needless to say Facebook won the case in 2014.

The company was bought by Facebook in 2012 for about \$1 billion in cash and stock. In September 2019 to further unify the company's apps and be more transparent to its audience, Facebook added the word "from Facebook" to Instagram branding.





## OnPurple.com - Purple.com

Founded in 2015 by brothers Tony and Terry Pearce, Purple is a Utah-based mattress company that also produces pillows, seat cushion, and platform bases. They named the company Purple after the color of the patented Hyper-Elastic Polymer™—the ultra-stretchy, yet durable, gel-like top layer of what would become their signature product: the Purple™ Bed.

The company started with the domain name OnPurple.com. They upgraded their domain name to the exact brand match Purple.com for \$900,000 in 2017. The seller, that originally bought the domain name in 1994, was only displaying a purple color on the Purple.com website and an FAQ section.



## TuftAndNeedle.com - TN.com

Tuft & Needle (stylized as TUFT&NEEDLE, often simply T&N) is an American direct-to-consumer mattress and bedding brand. The company was founded on July 19, 2012 by Daehee Park and John-Thomas Marino. Their goal was to create a brand that was authentic, craftsman-like, original, timeless and modern. Before brainstorming the name, JT took that large tufting needle and pinched different parts of the mattress, and then sewed those places together. He had made his first mattress. Later, when JT and Daehee were brainstorming what they might name their new company, JT remembered his experience and wrote “tuft” and “needle” in the long list of words that resonated with them. Tuft & Needle was born.

The company launched on the domain name TuftAndNeedle.com. However, they recognized that a simplified domain name could lead to an even better user experience – so they acquired the domain TN.com in September 2015.

“The team wanted the option to use a shorter, more memorable domain name that could be easily typed. TN.com very much fits the bill. It's also an excellent advantage over some of the competitors and shows that Tuft & Needle is really leading the online revolution in the mattress industry.”

- shared Tuft & Needle's founders on NamePros.



## Canva.com

Canva, a graphic design software solutions provider, was established in 2012 and is based in Sydney, Australia.

Melanie Perkins, CEO and co-founder of Canva, and Canva co-founder Cliff Obrecht took out a loan and brought in a great tech team to build Fusion Books, the school yearbook design business that preceded Canva.

After a year-long hunt for a new name, Perkins finally settled on “Canvas Chef”, a name she now admits may have missed the mark. One of Canva’s French engineers explained that Canvas was pronounced “Canva” in French and the startup’s name was born. The startup acquired the exact brand match domain name Canva.com to get into every workplace across the globe. Now, 80% of Fortune 500 companies are using their tool.

## Vinomofo.com

Founded by André Eikmeier and Justin Dry in 2011 from an Adelaide garage, Vinimofo is one of Australia's fastest growing and most awarded companies. Online wine retailer had decided on using the name Vinomojo and was two days out from its launch when it received a cease and desist letter. The letter was from a trademark lawyer representing a public company who had a wine called Mojo. Vinomofo co-founder Andre Eikmeier explained in The New Hustle it left him and co-founder Justin Dry in a serious predicament.

“I said, ‘why don’t we call it Vinomofo for the m#&@erfuckers who are trying to steal our mojo. What started as a joke got some momentum, and here we are: Vinomofo.”

- Co-Founder and Joint CEO @ Vinomofo

Since that launch date in 2011, Vinomofo has become a household name that successfully operates on the exact brand match domain Vinomofo.com.

## Convoy.com

Convoy is an American trucking software company co-founded by CEO Dan Lewis and CTO Grant Goodale in 2015. In June 2015, the company secured the exact brand match domain name Convoy.com for \$135,000 before launch. The startup got backing from the likes of Jeff Bezos and Marc Benioff. Now that's a business that takes its branding seriously!



## Voice.io - Voice.com

Announced in June 2019, a blockchain-based social media platform called Voice is developed by EOS creator Block.One. In April 2019, only 1 month before they acquired the .com, Block.One elected to acquire the domain name Voice.io. Ultimately, the company decided that they needed to own the .com to achieve their aspirations in a highly competitive market. The company paid \$30 million in cash to acquire the exact brand match domain name Voice.com. It was an all-cash transaction, and one of the biggest reported cash only domain sales of all time.

„The word ‘Voice’ is simple and universally understood. It’s also ubiquitous — as a search term, it returns billions of results on the internet. An ultra-premium domain name like Voice.com can help a company achieve instant brand recognition, ignite a business, and massively accelerate value creation.“

- Marge Breya, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, MicroStrategy Incorporated



## WhiteClaw.com

White Claw Hard Seltzer is an alcoholic seltzer water beverage owned by Mark Anthony Brands. The beverage was introduced in 2016.

We are named after the rogue "White Claw Waves" that travel in sets of three across the ocean, delivering unexpected refreshment from the spray that leaps from their crests as they crash to shore with both strength and beauty.

The company operates on the exact brand match domain name WhiteClaw.com.

## ThirdLove.com

Launched in 2013 by Heidi Zak, ThirdLove is an American company producing and selling bras, underwear, loungewear and nightwear. As of October 2018, Forbes estimated ThirdLove to be worth \$750 million and was placed on the Forbes Next Billion Dollar Startup List.

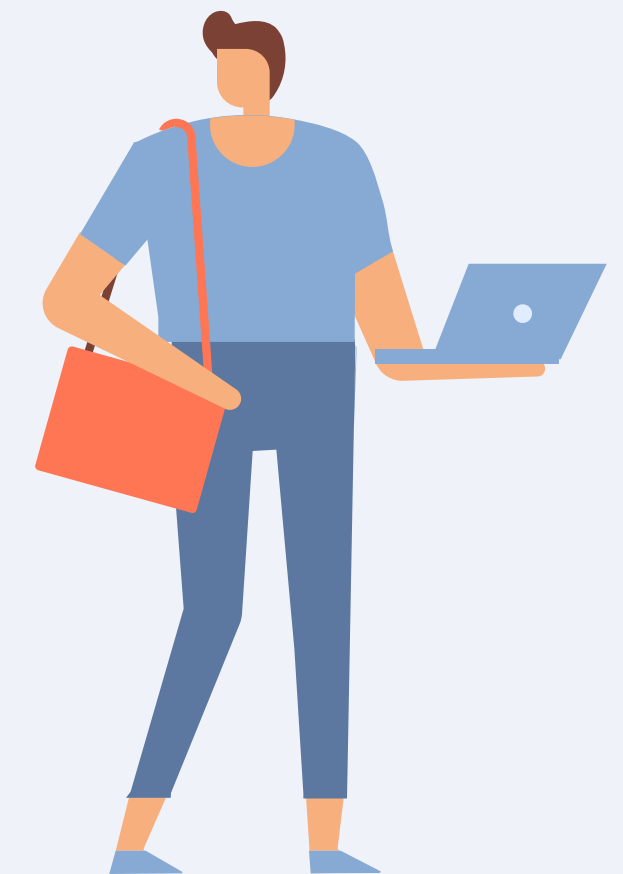
“When a woman truly loves an item of clothing, it’s because it hits all three points — style, fit and feel (comfort). We strive to do that with each and every bra, which is why we named the company “ThirdLove.”

The company owns the exact brand match domain name ThirdLove.com, along with 20 other domains including common misspellings of their brand name and different domain extensions.



## TheTileApp.com - Tile.com

Founded in 2012, Tile is an American consumer electronics company which produces devices to help users find their belongings, such as keys and backpacks. In September 2017, the company upgraded its domain name from TheTileApp.com to the exact brand match tile.com. The price of the acquisition was not shared.



## Zoom.us - Zoom.com

It's pretty much impossible you haven't heard of Zoom by now. It is a cloud-based video conferencing service headquartered in San Jose, California. Eric Yuan, a former Cisco Webex engineer and executive, founded Zoom in 2011, and launched its software in 2013. Zoom's aggressive revenue growth and perceived ease-of-use and reliability of its software resulted in a \$1 billion valuation in 2017, making it a "unicorn" company.

“One of my kids’ favorite children’s books that I read to them over and over was Zoom City. I loved this fun little book as much as my kids, and hoped to use the name someday for the perfect company that embodied the same values of creativity, exploration, happiness, and trust. And the name works perfectly with a product that connects us visually to one another and that always works so fast and seamlessly.” - shared Eric about how the name came about.

In 2018, the company upgraded its domain name from Zoom(.us) to the exact brand match domain name zoom.com. When the company went public it was revealed in their S-1 filing intangible asset purchases of \$2.018 million, which matches in timing the domain name acquisition.



## Fair.com

Founded in 2016, Fair is a car leasing company that aims to grant access to mobility to everyone by pioneering the car-as-a-service (CaaS) concept. The company wanted its name be associated with higher human values.

”We wanted a name that reflects what we truly stand for in the world.”

The company acquired the exact brand match domain name Fair.com from the outset.

”Fair.com is the cornerstone of our brand identity so for us, there was no other choice but to get it done right from the very start. ” - Scott shares

## WeWork.com

Founded in 2010, WeWork is an American commercial real estate company that provides shared workspaces for technology startups and services for other enterprises.

In January 2019, the company decided to change the legal name of WeWork to We Company and, according to the August 2019 Form S-1 filing, the firm paid \$5.9 million to license the name from an entity called We Holdings owned by Adam Neumann and additional WeWork founders. WeWork paid its own CEO, Adam Neumann, just shy of \$6 million for use of the word "We." Neumann owned the trademark through a private company, which then sold the trademark use to WeWork. When WeWork filed to go public in 2019, Adam Neumann has returned about \$5.9 million worth of stock that was originally paid to him to acquire the trademark "We." After public criticism Adam Neumann gave the cash back around September 2019.

The company owns the exact brand match domain name WeWork.com.

## Lemonade.com

Believe it or not, Lemonade doesn't sell lemonade; it sells insurance. Founded in April 2015, Lemonade is an insurance technology company using artificial intelligence and behavioural economics to offer home and renters insurance. A major early question was whether a newborn company, with a juvenile name, could engender the necessary trust for insurance.

« Everything was riding on our contrarian theory: that Lemonade's newness and uniqueness would make it more trustworthy, not less » as Lemonade founder-CEO Daniel Schreiber admitted in a January 2018 blog post.

The company uses the exact brand match domain Lemonade.com domain



## XiaoMi.com - Mi.com

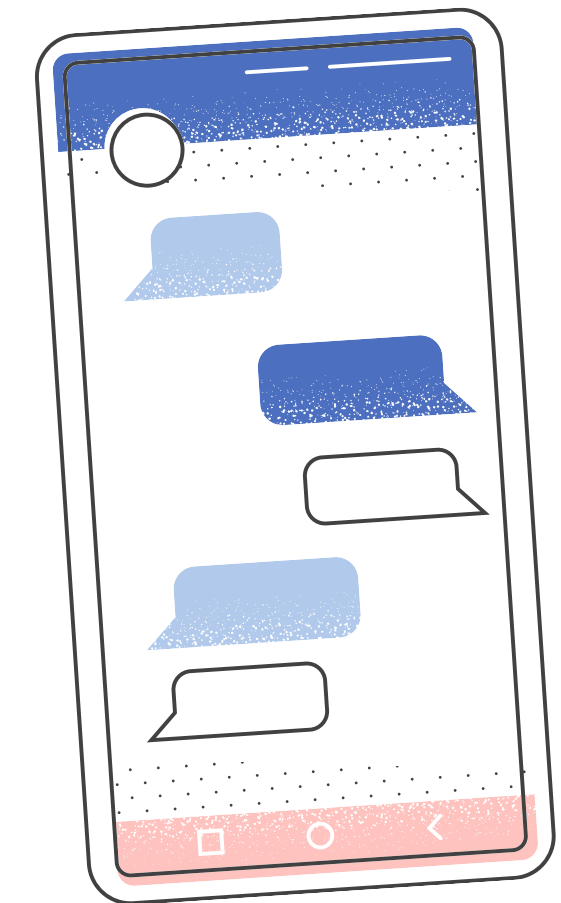
Xiaomi Corporation is a Chinese electronics company founded in April 2010 and headquartered in Beijing. It is the fourth company after Apple, Samsung and Huawei to have self-developed mobile phone chip capabilities.

The literal English meaning of the word Xiaomi is Millet, which means little, young or small in Chinese. It makes people think about some cute, wonderful things, young people which are major composite of the MIUI fan group and the companies' target users group. The company name in Mandarin characters is 小米.

“I’ve always pushed them to come up with a perfect brand name. Can I register the trademarks? Can I get the brand domain name? Can I get the domain Xiaomi.com? Or I will not use the name if I can’t get them both.”- reasons Lei Jun, a Chinese billionaire entrepreneur who co-founded Xiaomi Inc.

In April 2014, the company rebranded its name from Xiaomi to Mi to reach a global audience. They acquired the domain name Mi.com for \$3.6 million, , according to the China Daily.

„Xiaomi.com is now Mi.com. Shorter name, Bigger world.“ Xiaomi's global boss Hugo Barra  
Part of the reasoning behind the change is simple -- non-native Chinese speakers tend to have trouble pronouncing the "xiao" part of the name, often getting their tongues twisted. Most will wrongly pronounce it as "shaow", but the actual pronunciation is closer to "she-ow."





## XiaoMi.com - Mi.com

Xiaomi Corporation is a Chinese electronics company founded in April 2010 and headquartered in Beijing. It is the fourth company after Apple, Samsung and Huawei to have self-developed mobile phone chip capabilities.

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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 4, where we will look at some epik fails in naming over the last decade and some direct to consumer brands that did great.

