

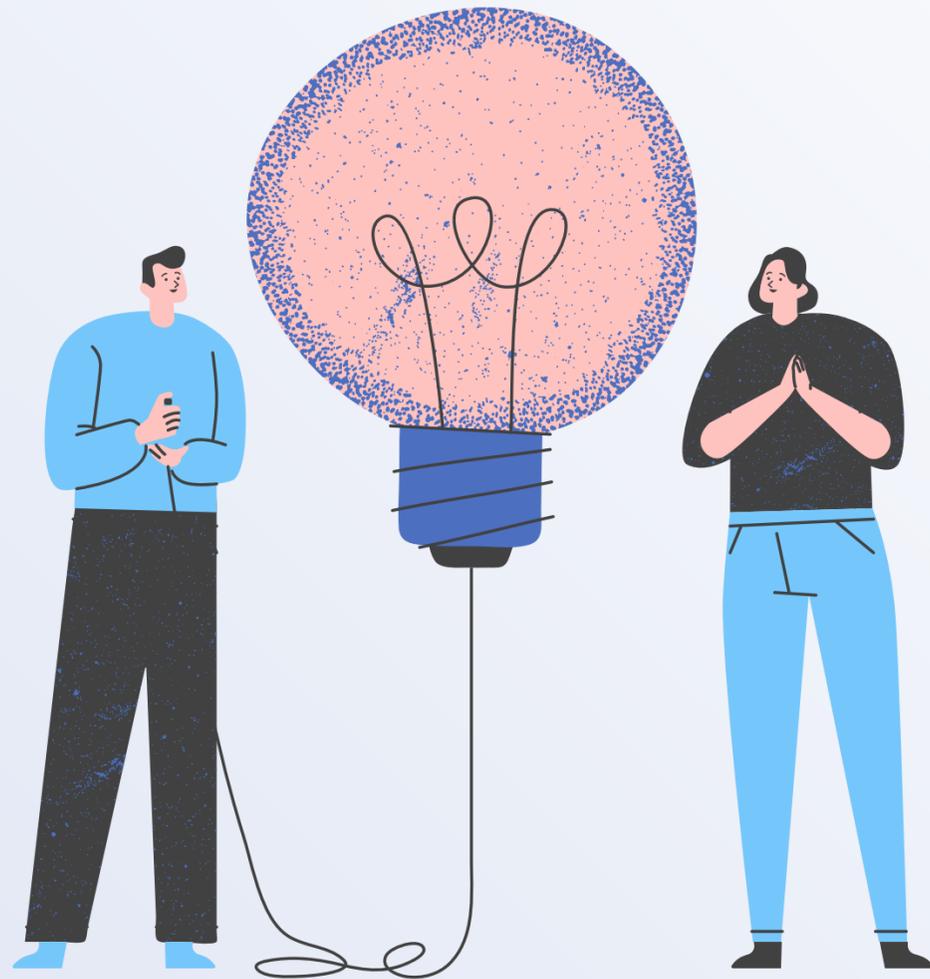
A DECADE IN DOMAINS

2010-2020

Presented by MarkupUpgrade



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

Epic fails of the decade

Naming and branding are by far not easy, even for well established global brands. In the 60s Electrolux came up with the infamous "Nothing sucks like an Electrolux." Edgy marketing or just fail? It's for you to judge. Let's have a look at some recent naming and branding attempts gone wrong.



“A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is—it is what consumers tell each other it is.”

- Scott Cook -

Dunkin' Donuts - Dunkin'

William Rosenberg, an American entrepreneur who founded the Dunkin' Donuts, at first named his restaurant “Open Kettle.” Then, an architect working for the restaurant was inspired by the idea of dunking doughnuts into coffee, according to company lore. In 1950, Open Kettle became Dunkin’ Donuts. On September 25, 2018, the company announced that it is officially dropping the "Donuts" from its name, going by simply "Dunkin'". The change became effective in January 2019.

However, the 69-year-old chain failed to secure the exact brand match domain name **Dunkin.com**. The owners of the domain are Tim Dunkin & Wandzia Rose from training & coaching firm called **DunkinWorks.com**. When you type the domain Dunkin.com in your browser you’ll be automatically redirected to their website. The next thing you will see is the note: “This is NOT the path to the company Dunkin Donuts. To contact them, you will need to find their site.”...does "Ouch" cover it?

Skims - Kimono

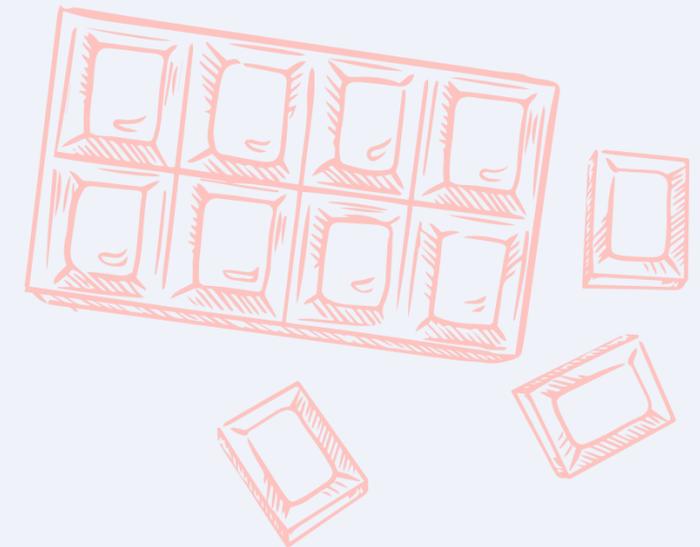
Skims is an American Shapewear Line by Kim Kardashian West launched in 2019. In June 2019, the entrepreneur and 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star launched her debut line of shapewear solutions under the name Kimono and on the matching domain name kimono.Com. Although, she has reportedly filed to trademark the word "Kimono" along with the phrase "Kimono body", she had to drop the name after a plea from the city of Kyoto and many posts calling the name cultural appropriation.

In August 2019, in an Instagram post, Kim announced changing the name of her new brand to SKIMS. She went on to explain that she used to cut-up and customize her shapewear when she couldn't find the right pieces or ones that matched her skin tone. Thus, Kimono (now Skims) was born. The company owns both Skims.com and Kimono.com (redirects to skims.com). Another fail worth mentioning there - the singular to Skims - skim.com is actually an adult live cam site. I bet they don't complain for the extra traffic they get!

ISIS Chocolates

Founded in 1923 as "Italo Suisse", the Belgium chocolate maker changed its name to "ISIS Chocolates" in 2013. ISIS, of course, is also the acronym derived from Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the jihadist group that arose in the Syrian civil war and now has invaded parts of Iraq.

After the company experienced a slump in sales due to its name association with the Islamic terrorist group, the name had to be changed to "Libeert". They have the exact brand match domain name Libeert.com



WeightWatchers - WW

In September 2018, In an attempt to rebrand itself away from what you might consider your mother's diet program, Weight Watchers officially changed its name to WW. However, WW failed to generate enough awareness for the name change before the rebrand. The advertising was confusing, weak marketing campaign, and a new purpose all at once diluted a half a century's worth of equity among customers. The abrupt rebrand lacked context for consumers. This is what could happen if you flip the switch too quickly.



Qwikster (launched by Netflix in 2011)

Qwikster was launched by Netflix in 2011. The service barely lasted a month. The company immediately received public backlash from consumers. Qwikster never would have received such mockery or derision if it had been called something that approached a respectable name for a media company. While the name does have a rhythmic quality, it has nothing to do with the service it represents.

“Qwikster sounds like a lot of things—a super cool startup from 1998 that’s going to be totally rad and revolutionize the way you “surf” the “web”; something a cop in a 1930s talkie picture might call an elusive criminal—but a DVD-by-mail service in 2011 it does not.” - Huffington Post article

Fashism

Founded in 2009, Ashton Kutcher-backed startup Fashism was a web and mobile app that allowed users to solicit feedback from peers about their fashion choices and style. The ultimately unsuccessful startup's name was a play on the word fascism - an odd choice for an app based on voting, which might have sadly been lost on its younger fanbase.

Needless to say, the app announced that it is officially closing down in September 2013.

Bawte

Founded in 2012, Bawte gave consumers a way to track information about products they bought, such as warranties and recalls. The word “Bawte” is tortured spelling of the word “bought”. The problem with making your name a deliberate misspelling of a common word is that potential customers are probably going to misspell it, too. The company announced that it is officially closing down in March 2015.

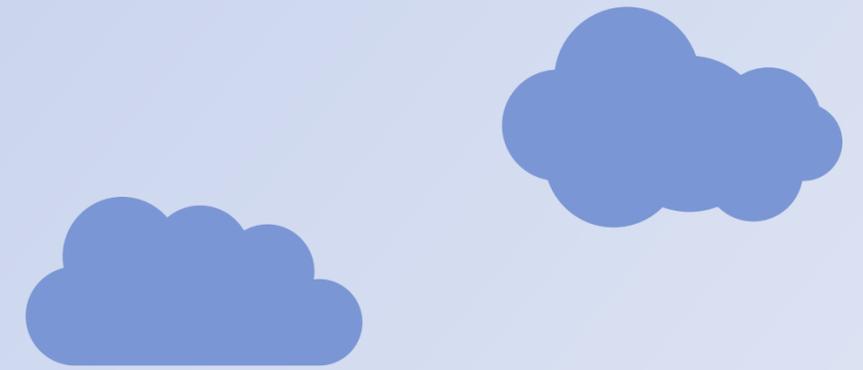
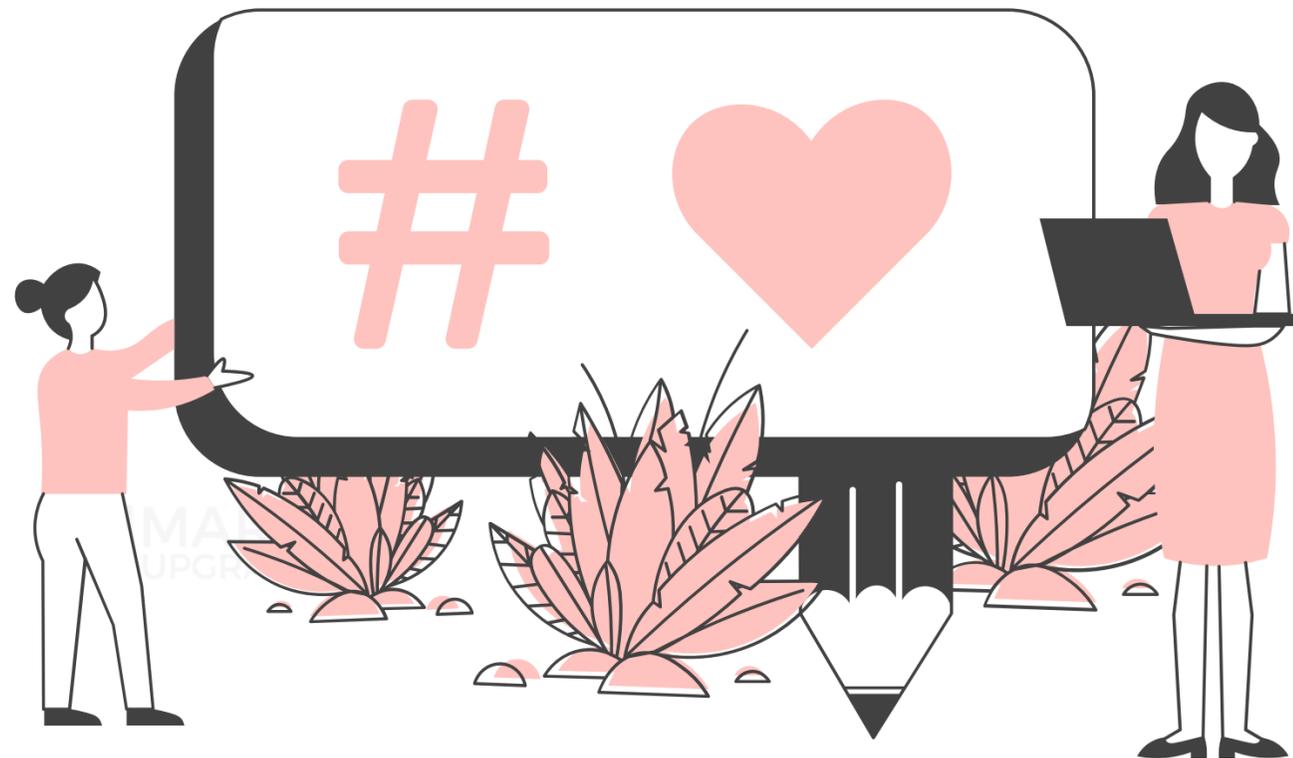


Bodega (Stockwell)

Stockwell (originally Bodega) is a startup company launched by former Google employees Paul McDonald and Ashwath Rajan in September 2017.

“The inspiration for our former name, Bodega, was, we thought, an homage to the local corner store, the people who ran it, and their place in our collective conscious.” Paul McDonald shared. He went on to explain that they “were wrong” in the culturally-appropriated branding. Finally, after raising nearly \$10 million in total funding, Bodega announced a name change to Stockwell. The name change, as Eater reported in 2018, was a strategic move to distance the company from its offensive use of “bodega” in the initial launch.

Direct to consumer brands that shine



In the last decade online shopping has gone from being almost non-existent to becoming a multibillion-dollar industry. Today's buyers are also increasingly seeking shopping that is tailored to their preferences and delivered directly to their doors.

Over the next five years the percentage of consumers planning DTC purchases will grow to 60%, with the most dramatic change propelled by newcomers, Diffusion found.

“Over the past few years, these DTC brands have turned the traditional retail marketplace on its head,” said Kate Ryan, Managing Director of Diffusion U.S. in the report. “We’ve seen the rebirth and redesign of everything from mattresses to sofas to toothbrushes and razors.”

Understanding how people search helps businesses create a unique experience for them. By embracing these trends and preparing for them, retailers can look to 2020 as another positive opportunity to grow their online brands.

“People shop and learn in a whole new way compared to just a few years ago, so marketers need to adapt or risk extinction.”

- Brian Halligan, founder & CEO of HubSpot -

Casper.com

Launched in April 2014, the online mattress retailer called Casper is a billion-dollar company leading the charge of online retailers disrupting the industry. Their name does more than stick in the mind. It tells you very clearly that they are not like any other mattress company.

The name "Casper" has "nothing to do with" the friendly ghost, the inspiration came from the name of one of the co-founders' old roommates. At the time, he was a six-foot-six German guy named Kasper, who slept on a twin mattress. Eventually they went with Casper (with a C). The startup started off with CasperSleep.com and in 2014 they upgraded their domain name to the exact brand match Casper.com. In January 2020, Casper filed to go public.

Postmates.com

Postmates is an American company that offers local delivery of restaurant-prepared meals and other goods. The company was co-founded by Sam Street, Sean Plaice and Bastian Lehmann in 2011. As of February 2019, Postmates operates in 2,940 U.S. cities.

According to Rewind & Capture, the most likely origin of the name, then, is two fold. Post refers to the postal aspect, while mates (British-English for friends) stands as a synonym for the peer-driven approach. The company acquired the exact brand match domain name Postmates.com in May 2011.



Glossier.com

For Glossier founder, Emily Weiss, the journey started in 2010, when she launched her blog, Into The Gloss, while working as a fashion assistant at Vogue. Her blog eventually served as a springboard for Glossier, her unicorn makeup and skincare company, founded in 2014.

The company was named after the biggest performer in the world. The name is very apropos, given that Glossier is primed to becoming the largest and most influential beauty brand for Millennials. Emily acquired the exact brand match domain name Glossier.com in July 2015.



BlueApron.com

Blue Apron is a New York-based startup that delivers millions of recipes and fresh ingredients to subscribers every month. It was founded in August 2012 by Matt Salzberg, Ilia Papas and Matt Wadiak and it exclusively operates in the United States.

The name Blue Apron is an homage to chefs around the world who wear blue aprons while learning to cook, according to Blue Apron's website. The company has secured the exact brand match domain name BlueApron(.com) from the outset.

Fun fact, up to 2007 the domain was owned by author Bart Thomson and used as a personal blog. It stopped existing around then and the domain was not in use up until it got acquired by the Blue Apron we know today.

OnePeloton.com

The brand name is Peloton, as you likely already know. You won't find them on Peloton.com (that domain belongs to a software company) but nevertheless the company has earned a name over the past decade. Peloton was founded in 2013 and was initially funded by a Kickstarter campaign. Their main products are a stationary bicycle and treadmill working on subscription basis, allowing users to participate in classes online from the comfort of their homes.

Peloton is one of the few companies who benefited from the lockdown measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the estimate dated May 2020, its stock price increased by 36%, online searches for “Peloton” increased almost three times since the end of February, and quarterly sales jumped nearly 61% to \$420.2 million (Wikipedia).

Everlane.com

Everlane was founded in 2010 with the mission to make clothing choices easy and ethical. They literally tell you everything about their products - from the sources of the materials to the final cost of their clothes and the markup the company takes. They also go a long way in educating their clients on supply chain, factories, employees. They started with menswear and later on expanded with fashion for women, accessories, shoes and bags.

The company has their exact match domain name Everlane.com and operates primarily online.

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 5, where we will look at some blockchain and AI brands of the last decade.

