

Tips on Choosing a Title For Your Book

How many of you have spent hours or days toiling over the title for your book? My first book, *The Cliffhanger*, was renamed probably six times before I stayed with the current title. Naming your book can be difficult, especially if the book will work as a sort of branding for everything else you do. Non-fiction books are often seen as a stepping stone to speaking engagements, product launches, and a variety of other business endeavors. In fact, the naming of a non-fiction or business book is so critical that a poorly chosen title can actually make or break a book's success. If you're in the midst of picking a name, or planning future titles. There are some basic strategies you should consider before you finalize your book cover.

The name of your book must tell people what it's about. If you try to be clever and make them guess, your potential customer will just put it down and move on to a title they do understand.

Put the benefit right in the name - for example *Chicken Soup for the Soul* tells you right up front that much like a cup of chicken soup when you're sick, this book is going to make you feel better. If this leaves you feeling perplexed, take a moment to list five benefits of your book - once you have those benefits listed slowly but surely a book title will begin to emerge.

Think about all the different uses you might be able to derive from the name of your book. Is it going to be on your web site? Is it a stand alone book or part of a product line? Or is this book one of a series? Determining the exact uses of this title will help you define it further.

And finally, go see what the competition is doing. Spend an afternoon at the bookstore and see what titles have worked well for similar books in your genre.

Other Naming Tips

Did you know that some words are easier to remember than others? Sound odd? Not really. Language experts will tell us that we just react differently to certain sounds. The letters K and P for example are what language experts call "plosives." A plosive is a little bit of language that pops out of your mouth and draws attention to itself. A plosive is a "stopper" in language. A plosive makes us pause for emphasis when we say it. The letters B, C, D, K, P and T are all plosives.

What's especially interesting is that brand names beginning with plosives have higher recall scores than non-plosive names. Several studies of the top 200 brand names have made that point. Examples: Bic, Coca-Cola, Kellogg's, Kodak, Pontiac, etc.

If you've picked a title for your book or a name for your business or product line that is "unusual" - you might want to check the meaning first. That goes for foreign translation as well. Here are a few examples of names that were chosen without the proper research:

In 1997 Reebok issued a mass recall of their new women's running shoe dubbed "Incubus" - a savvy news reporter brought their attention to the fact that incubus means: "an evil spirit believed to descend upon and have sex with women while they sleep. Estee Lauder stopped short of exporting their line of Country Mist makeup to Germany when managers pointed out that "mist" in German is slang for "manure." Trying to be clever, The folks at Guess jeans placed the Japanese characters "ge" and "su" next to a model in Asian magazines, intending them to mean "Guess." But "gesu" translated in Japanese means "vulgar," "low" class" or "meanspirited."

Naming Tip!

Stumped for a name? Try heading over to *The Naming Newsletter*. While this site is designed primarily for naming and/or branding companies, there's a lot of great information on titling strategies and tips that can translate easily to your book title.

About the Author

Penny C. Sansevieri helps turn authors into success stories. Check out her Virtual Author Tours, free insider info on publishing, and author marketing newsletter at <http://www.amarketingexpert.com>

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