

While ICANN creates a garage, creative agencies should create showrooms

 By [Naseem Javed](#)

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ICANN, rightfully from its inception, is a very superior technical organisation, surrounded by teams of highly intelligent people working on the long-term integrity of the Internet. Like a real high-tech garage full of engineers and mechanics designing high speed luxury cars, they are rolling out the great new gTLD programmes.

Showrooms, not garages

But what the image brokers and ad agencies now need are not garages but rather showrooms, where prospective customers could comfortably see the finished models, smell the interiors and take the cyber vehicles for the test drive.

ICANN's new gTLD global cyber branding platform is an amazing combination of technology and marketing foresight, set to kindle a new high level cyber brand name revolution on a global scale.

But around the world there are two serious lingering questions for the image servicing teams: first, where and how can they create new billings and what special prerequisite are necessary to articulate these topics to their top clients for closing the deals.

Processing some 1000 applications

ICANN is contemplating processing some 1000 applications of new proposed gTLDs, starting early 2011. The price tag of US\$187 000 per application, plus another similar amount in domain registry services and legal costs, still makes this the most cost-effective and powerful solution for acquiring an exclusive worldwide cyber name root.

The gTLD subject is highly sophisticated and requires much in-depth study (see www.icann.org); for image brokers and applicants, here are the key points for your next board meeting.

Primarily, any organisation which already spends US\$10 million yearly or more in advertising of its brand is an automatic potential prospect and, as a minimum, should obtain a professionally calibrated Name Evaluation Report -to determine whether its name identity is fit enough to join this gTLD race and what would the hidden powers or liabilities imbedded in its alpha-structure be.

Three key points

The evaluation must conclude with three key points:

1. What are the immediate and future threats to the current name identity?
2. What are the options for a partial or a full name change?
3. Under what global rules or 'the laws of corporate naming' will they find the perfect solution that is best for their wider customer base, international marketing goals, and equally passable under the new ICANN policies?

An objective and impartial analysis solely based on nomenclature issues is a must, otherwise the process will become another graphic- and slogan-driven rebranding routine.

In order to achieve high level of marketing efficiency in such deliberations, the ad sector will have to team up with right domain registry and legal services under the guidance of world-class corporate nomenclature expertise and create highly presentable and workable inventory of ideas and roll them out as turnkey cyber vehicles.

Billion dollar domain babies

Once this game is properly understood, it certainly allows the creation of 'billion dollar domain babies' where superpower naming ideas become billion-dollar intellectual properties for their holders.

This will be an amazing game to play and equally to watch.

The image-branding agencies seeking new clients have three tasks:

1. how to identify their top clients and offer them world-class recommendations with full confidence to play this game,
2. create back-up and supportive plans to capture special name identities for targeted markets, and
3. attract new clients by providing leadership on exclusive options on generic and destination brands.

Two deciding factors

Meanwhile, for the applicants of the gTLD, there are two deciding factors.

First, the centrality of corporate nomenclature - as without a perfect name solution there cannot be a winnable proposed name application.

Secondly, according to a soon-to-be-released study by ABC Namebank, 97.4% business names cannot pass the gTLD test for being too long or too many words (eg Transcontinental Logistical Support & Services, 20th Century Fox, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Bang & Olufsen, ConocoPhillips, PriceWaterhouseCoopers) or too difficult to pronounce or spell (eg Axiomner, Acczess, Multiplexerion) or too diluted and in serious trademark conflicts (eg National, United, Gulf, Western, Eastern or General).

Majority of names don't fit

Simply put, outside the top global brands, the largest majority of mid-size and big business names around the world simply will neither fit ICANN's rules nor the new cyber usability criteria.

This forces immediate action upon organisations, either to have a perfect naming strategy and join the game or simply back off and watch the race as a spectator.

2011 will be just the beginning of the gTLD race but the influx of newly digitised media and new gTLD cyber platforms will create very advanced-level image marketing demands.

ICANN has certainly laid out a golden path for the smarter agencies to capture the opportunities, and now the real players and leaders are being called.

ABOUT NASEEM JAVED

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