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PRESS RELEASE

December 26, 2007

Experts Pick the Best and Worst Brand Names of 2007

Minneapolis, MN – While it opens itself up to potty humor, Nintendo’s “Wii” still tops the list of best brand names of 2007 according to naming experts John Stucker and Devon Thomas Treadwell of Pollywog, Inc.

“It’s a name that you just don’t forget,” said Stucker. “Phonetically, it sounds like “we,” a nod to its multiplayer design--or “whee,” the sound of people having fun. Graphically, the lower-case i’s resemble two little people, which has been used to great effect in the “Wii’s” TV commercials.”

Names also getting the “thumbs up” from the duo include “Twitter,” “Jawbone,” “Blackbird,” and “FUBAR,” Stanley’s extreme name for its extreme redesign of the lowly crowbar.

Stucker and Thomas Treadwell agree that some of the worst names of 2007 include “Windows Vista,” “dimdim,” and “HYmini,” a name that sounds an awful lot like – well, you know.

“It is an unfortunate name for a very cool little device that absorbs wind and solar energy and converts it to electricity for cell phones, MP3 players, and other such gadgets,” said Thomas Treadwell. “How could they not have realized how close this name sounds to a part of female anatomy?”

About Pollywog: Pollywog works with brands in their formative stages, helping companies with the initial steps of positioning, naming and brand identity. Principals John Stucker and Devon Thomas Treadwell have more than 35 years of agency experience including Campbell Mithun, BBDO, J. Walter Thompson, Young & Rubicam and Bozell. They have worked on many leading brands, including the Walt Disney Company, Paramount Home Video, Coffee-mate, 3M, Southwestern Bell, @Home, Berlitz, Best Buy, Harmon AutoGlass and Mexicana Airlines.

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*Full list of best and worst below

BEST BRAND NAMES OF 2007

1. Wii- With a name that sounds small and childish and makes an easy target for potty humor, the Nintendo "Wii" created a media firestorm when it was introduced. There were dire predictions of failure, and the brand name was nearly universally panned.

But it was a name that you didn't forget. Phonetically, it sounds like "we," a nod to its multiplayer design--or "whee," the sound of people having fun. Graphically, the lower-case i's resemble two little people, which has been used to great effect in the Wii'sTV commercials.

Despite the negative press surrounding its introduction, the "Wii" quickly outsold the Microsoft Xbox 360 and Sony Playstation 3 and continues to lead the category as of this month.

2. FUBAR- Could there be a better name for a demolition tool? Stanley scored a home run with this extreme name for its extreme redesign of the lowly crowbar. The name's acronym ("F*cked Up Beyond All Recognition") aptly describes "FUBAR's" end result. Having "bar" in the brand name helps define the tool, while the profanity embedded in the acronym gets the brand down and dirty along with its customers. And heck--it's just fun to say.

3. Jawbone - A Bluetooth headset, whose brand name resonates with multiple layers of meaning. In addition to describing where the headset is worn, "jawbone" means to verbally persuade, and isn't that what you're doing most of the time you're on a cell phone?

4. Obsidian- Caribou Coffee's dark, smooth roast maps nicely to the black, glossy stone created by molten lava.

5. Twitter is a Web site where people share what they happen to be doing at the moment, no matter how trivial. Imagine millions of cheeping chickadees and you won't be far off.

6. Blackbird - This sleek desktop PC is Hewlett Packard's answer to such high-powered computer gaming system rivals as Alienware, Overdrive PC, and Dell's XPS series. Inspired by the famous Lockheed reconnaissance plane, the name perfectly suits the contoured black wedge-shaped CPU that appears to hover a few inches above its aluminum stand.

7. First Blush - All-natural grape juice sold by Whole Foods. The name evokes the blush of the grape as well as a feeling of youthful innocence and purity--an attractive combination for a natural food product.

8. Chevy Volt - Electric concept car. The name is short, friendly and perfectly fits the product. Now if they would just put it on the market.

9. RoughRider Wheelchair- Designed for use in developing countries, this inexpensive and easy-to-assemble wheelchair has a name that says it can handle less than optimal conditions.

10. Hint - A great name for a bottled water containing no sweeteners, no preservatives and no calories--just a *hint* of natural flavor. And it's fun to order, too. "Can you give me a Hint, please?"

WORST BRAND NAMES OF 2007

1. Windows Vista - Microsoft's most important product launched in 6 years, Vista hit the shelves with much fanfare. Curiously, the name already seemed familiar. Did no one at Microsoft ever hear of the

venerable AltaVista, a search engine dating back to 1995 and still in use today?

Not only does it overlap a name that's already firmly established in the audience's psyche, "Vista" is just plain anemic. With all that Microsoft spends on branding, surely they could have come up with a sexier name than this. Sounds like a high-rise assisted living facility.

2. Diet Coke Plus - Hard to imagine a more generic brand name for Coke's foray into the brave new world of vitamin-fortified soda pop. Whether Diet Coke Plus is a brilliant innovation--or the branding giant's biggest blunder since New Coke--this new soda should have had a brand name that wasn't so, well, "*flat*."

3. Kindle - Amazon's new e-bookreader is another name that makes the list in part because of unfulfilled potential. Amazon had plenty of money to spend on creating this brand name. And Amazon itself is a fantastic name, evocative and rich with multiple meanings. "Kindle," on the other hand, really has only one meaning to most people: to start something, especially a fire. It lacks the depth of a name like Amazon, and the idea of burning combined with books stirs up a negative image that's most likely the opposite of what Amazon intended.

4. Joost - Internet TV service. "Joost" is one of those trendy nonsense brand names so common right now, especially for technology companies. Apparently the idea is to create a word that has not yet been taken as a domain name, then spend half your venture capital getting it to mean something.

Joost made our list because of its high visibility, but so could any of these recently created brands: "Tagtooga," "Bebo," "Meemo," "Qoosa," "Xobni," "Thoof," "Lala," "Wufoo," "Kijiji," "Zoogmo," "Faroo," "Ponoko," "Qoop," "Ceedo," "ZocDoc," "Doostang," "Zixxo," "Mego," "Wixi," "Meebo," "Wakooopa," "Qosimo," "Hulu," "Raketu," "Viiv," "Woomp," "Bliin," "Qumana," "BooRah," "Yoomba," "Sporge," "Joomla," "Argoo."

5. Cocaine Energy Drink. You know you've made a branding boo-boo when the FDA yanks your product off the shelf.

6. Learnia - Educational assessment software from Harcourt Assessment. And a painful condition caused by thinking too hard.

7. dimdim - A free Web conferencing service. Memorable and simple to spell, but why would you imply that the service or your customers are not so bright? Unlike the "Wii," this name doesn't convey any meanings other than the negative one. It's just dum dum.

8. Honda Fit - What a boring name for such a snappy little car! In Europe the same model is known as the Jazz. Honda's naming decisions are all the more puzzling when you consider that Europeans are more fit than Americans and America is the birthplace of jazz.

9. EasyShare All-In-One Printer- This new inkjet printer from Kodak boasts disruptive technology that combines high print quality and inexpensive ink. But instead of launching it with an appropriately new and dazzling name, Kodak saddled its printer with its tired "EasyShare" brand name, which has been around since 1994 and has been applied to everything from cameras to software.

If consumers don't yet understand that they can get great print quality and spend practically nothing for an ink cartridge, perhaps it's because "EasyShare" doesn't quite say it.

10. HYmini - An unfortunate name for a very cool little device that absorbs wind and solar energy and converts it to electricity for cell phones, MP3 players, and other such gadgets. How could they not have realized how close this name sounds to a part of female anatomy? Criminy.

