

# Branding and Effective Use of Web Addresses and Web Pages: So This Century, So This Century.com

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The Internet has given branding a new campground. And, like some television commercials, some web pages are camp indeed. Camp may sell; it may not.

On television, camp is noticed - viewers see the action, viewers hear the action, even from another room, even if intending to watch only the sitcom.

On the Internet, camp sits, waiting for visitors, visitors who must decide to visit and who visit one at a time. Those who visit are tremendously-motivated consumers who have already selected your brand in typing your web address.

How do you get those visitors?

Note: We are herein using the term "web page" for all Internet views and the terms "web address" and "domain name" interchangeably. Please see Appendix One for a brief discussion of our terminology.

## Consumers are ready to visit brand web pages.

Brands are not using fully the potential of the Internet to influence consumer buying behavior. Consumers hungry for special deals or a break from the boredom of work (or of a low-carbohydrate diet) are ready to visit the Internet web pages of products advertised on television and radio, in magazines and newspapers, and even on billboards, but advertisers are not doing the right things to get those consumers to their product web pages. Even the huge 2004 Super Bowl TV audience, primed to go online to bet on the game and even to vote for their favorite commercials, did not visit advertisers' web pages in great numbers.

Advertisers are placing on popular Internet web pages their paid Internet ads that look like small magazine ads or even like small television commercials. However, company and product web pages are being neglected. Millions of consumers go online daily, checking and sending email and willing to look around online. Just as they 'channel surf' with the TV remote, modern-day consumers will also use their faster broadband connections of today to quickly check out new web addresses that sound interesting or useful -- sometimes even as a way to relax while in the middle of a workday project. But they are not being invited to visit brand web pages.

Web page visitors are valuable. They don't feel pressured to visit web pages, so they're especially receptive to advertising messages there. And they are not Internet-jaded -- they enjoy telling others about the web pages they find and like. Many will recommend a web page much more often than they will recommend a product. These consumers have their fingers on the keyboard. They could be visiting your product web pages -- but they aren't.

Why don't consumers visit brand web pages that are online now?

Because no one tells them to visit.

Because they can't remember where to visit.

Because they have been given no reason to visit.

How do you get consumers to visit your brand web pages?

\* 1) Tell them to visit.

In the 2004 Super Bowl commercials, arguably representing the highest standard of television advertising at the time, we can remember that the Internet addresses of advertisers, when given at all, were written much as one might add a telephone number to an information page, in relatively small type on the television screen. There was the implication that someone who wanted to contact the company might do so at the web page. Period. That is not telling potential customers to visit the web page.

Print the web address large enough and prominently enough  
on the television screen so it is seen as important.

Web page addresses written small in commercials are often hard to see -- certainly not easily visible on the smaller televisions in kitchens and bedrooms. "We have a web page" seems to be the only message conveyed by a hard-to-read web address. The Internet address appears to have replaced the telephone number as essential information added to an advertisement as a formality only. That doesn't help sales.

Speak the web address -- say it aloud.

Hardly anybody sits looking at the television through the whole program and all its commercials. A web address written might not be seen; a web address well-spoken on the living room television might be heard in the kitchen -- or the bathroom!

Advertisers for the televised Super Bowl should have known that the Super Bowl parties that game-watching extroverts throw are in full swing during the commercials. During commercials, people partying may hear the television, though they may not be looking at the screen. And introverts, alone by choice rather than at a party, are going to the bathroom during the commercials, probably with the door open, passively listening to the commercials. Who reads television screens at a time like that? Scream out the Internet address, Mr. Voice-Over!

In other situations some do listen, but not watch, television while online and can hear web addresses spoken aloud and immediately go to those web pages. Others have a radio on while they use an Internet-connected computer at home or work. A radio voice can ask them to go to a web address for "this afternoon's special" on that computer or on an Internet-enabled cell phone or handheld device. And probably no one is monitoring where

those consumers go online, so it's an easy decision for them to make, to check out a web page that sounds interesting.

Even among those looking at a television screen, a spoken web address can be more likely than would be a written web address to be noticed and remembered, in a few seconds and later, when the consumer is more likely to be at the computer. Many people's auditory memory is better than their visual memory. Even people who write down phone numbers and web addresses can lose papers, and they don't like to have to leave the computer to look for their notes.

Regardless, use of more than one sense to convey information helps more people remember more things better, no question about it.

Now that you've told consumers to visit your web page, what comes next?

1) Tell them to visit.

\* 2) Help them remember how to get there.

Customers have to get to a web page; you don't take it to them. And they need directions for the Information highway. They are "on the Internet" but they are not going to just happen to cruise by your web page. They are intentionally driving themselves on a trip to your web page and are motivated to arrive at the right place. But they will give up quickly if they can't remember exactly how to get there.

A telephone number that suggests how good a web address can be is 1-800-Power-On. Duke Power in North Carolina does a wonderful job telling its customers to call 1-800-Power-On when the lights go out, which they do somewhere in North Carolina during every winter ice storm.

Everyone tells everyone else the number to call. Those who don't already know the number already admit it -- and the giver of the information is inordinately pleased at being the first to tell the uninformed. Everyone remembers the number. Everyone calls - and for the right reason, to get the "power on". This is what Duke Power wants. Mission accomplished.

Advertisers need to send potential customers to the Internet like Duke Power sends its customers to the telephone. What should be considered in looking for that same sort of achievement with their web addresses?

Make the web address (domain name) memorable!

What makes a web address memorable enough to stick in a customer's head, for later? Ask people around you what web addresses they remember. Learn from what they tell you. The characteristics of a memorable name are varied, but names that are fun and relevant and somewhat unexpected almost always stay in memory.

For broadband, maybe Broadzilla.com -- where you find a wonderfully strong and gigantic broadband service. That name would be remembered by almost all viewers who hear it on

television or saw it written large -- even if only mentioned once, in a very small commercial or a small print ad.

Try on for memorability WorldWireThree.com for the next big wireless venture; ToughShip.com for a delivery service; and HotELf.com for, well, a hotel search by an elf. After you read this paper you may remember Thawts.com and 100Better.com. See if you can recall Starby.com for coffeehouse Internet, HelloCarb.com for low carbohydrate products and Cowhoo.com for a milk beverage. All these web addresses are fun and relevant to the product in an unexpected way.

Strangely, generic product-name web addresses are very often less memorable than are names with some unexpected element. Many generic web addresses are used by their registrants in effect as small search engines -- those registrants earn commissions from giving links to online stores that sell the product of the web address.

However, there are special generic web addresses that make a lot of sense to register and use for special products, e.g., LiquidSutures.com, LowCarbCakeMix.com, Vodkalce.com, Nicotine-FreeCigarettes.com and CannedWine.com. Often these names refer to relatively new products with a lot of current consumer interest. The names are, of course, not trademarks -- but registration of the domain name confers to the registrant a suggestion of ownership not unlike an assumed trademark and can, therefore, be quite valuable.

Make the web address easy to type in correctly.

Words and letters are more important online. There is no familiar blue and yellow package staring out at customers from a shelf. The search for your product is all customer-directed and the search is for letters only - letters in the right order. We can read words with letters omitted and misplaced (e.g., autmobils, prfme, cndy), but we can't find a web page that is not one hundred percent accurately typed in.

The way to spell the web address must be obvious.

That said, you may also want to register common misspellings and typos of your web address, to help the errant typist find you rather than the porn web pages with similarly-written names that spring up when web addresses become popular.

Write your web address so it makes sense the first time it is read.

Going for visual "design" makes sense for a visual brand that is established or establishing itself. But, just as you would not write your telephone number in script or vertically, do not make your web address other than so it is easy to understand.

Use upper and lower case letters.

Letters in web addresses are always "run together", without spaces. Use capital letters to differentiate words within the web address. Art designers like all-lower-case web addresses,

but even understandable English words written together in a web address look confusing on first glance -- lowcarbeaster.com libraryoftheinternet.com and adultadddoctors.com, for example, are great web addresses, but only when written with appropriate capital letters -- for example, LowCarbEaster.com and LibraryOfTheInternet.com. Spaces between words also help, spaces wide enough to help with reading the web address but not as wide as an actual space between words, so as not to be confusing to neophyte Internet surfers -- thus, Adult ADD Doctors.com.

Don't present the public with web addresses with slash marks.

These are programming jargon and are not appropriate to use when inviting consumers to visit your web page. You wouldn't tell consumers to remember to "go to page xxxv" of the booklet you are going to send them - and expect them to remember to do it AND actually do it. Don't even require them to remember where to find the slash mark on their keyboard, much less what comes after the slash.

Only use web addresses that end in ".com".

Web addresses can end in ".net" and a few other "extensions" but those ending in ".com" are of greatest value, as people commonly type in ".com" on their first try at a web address. In fact, the traffic meant for the web address with ".net" will very frequently arrive at the web address ending in ".com."

Do not use hyphens within your web addresses.

People go to non-hyphenated web pages first, and return to them -- even when knowing better. Registering a hyphenated domain name, however, is a good thing for commonly hyphenated phrases, such as "low-carb".

Remind your web visitors of the web address they are visiting.

Write your web address prominently on the web page -- so consumers can remember it better to come back and to send other visitors. Write "to get to this page again type in WebAddress.com," and perhaps give a place for "shall we email you to remind you of our web address?" Perhaps even say the name of the web page in a short sound clip of the web address, softly spoken by a friendly voice, or even by a cursing thug, if that would appeal to your consumer.

Okay, you've helped consumers remember how to get to your web page. What comes next in getting them to visit your brand web pages?

1) Tell them to visit.

2) Help them remember how to get there.

\* 3) Give them a reason to visit.

Many web pages seem designed for no well thought-out use. The bottom line: if you have a product or a service to sell, the reason for an Internet web page is to sell more.

Many advertisers have to first realize it is a good thing to get consumers to their web pages. You need to want, and to make, web pages that initiate or increase brand loyalty. The web page may be quite attractive and fun, but often advertisers still think of the web page as merely a directory listing (though it is surprising how hard it is to reach executives through many a company web page) – a necessary function, but not of greatest importance for sales.

Your web pages can be more than Internet buildings or letterheads or brochures. Yes, there can be, at a web page, business contact information, copies of the cutest ads for your product and press releases. Let's hope those help sales as well. But your web pages probably can do more.

Prepare your web pages for your consumers. Add things you believe will entice them to visit.

Show web page visitors something that will make them want to  
buy the product --  
not hire your web page designer.

Web pages can be magnificent. But many marvelous web pages are seldom seen. It's like organizing a fundraiser and forgetting to put a sign on the hotel and neglecting to ask anyone to come.

A flashy web page, like a flashy Super Bowl commercial, is not a guarantee of greater sales. Many Internet users, especially those with a mission, who are not just driving by an Internet building to see how it looks, will SKIP the "flash" component of a web page, the showy part. They don't even look at it. Showing off the artsy quality of a web page is no better than having showy, artsy commercials -- unless sales are increased.

While fancy web pages for some products do attract visitors who like online games and graphic arts, ask whether these visitors influence sales. And consider making the magnificence of your web pages an optional consumer choice rather than an introduction. Different web content and visual versus auditory approaches will appeal to different consumers.

Once potential customers get to a web page, further "hook" them -- with coupons, free merchandise, a game with the product's name all over the characters. Customers like deals and new things and praise and being included and being in on a joke. Entice a potential web page visitor with "Free soup spoon at [SoupScoop.com](http://SoupScoop.com)", "Contest to describe our new beer most eloquently at [LowCarbBeers.com](http://LowCarbBeers.com)", "Messy milk science experiments for children at [WhoLetTheCowsOut.com](http://WhoLetTheCowsOut.com)", and "Jokes about cellphones at [NoBullMobile.com](http://NoBullMobile.com)". Offer a beer can cover with your beer's name on it at [BeerCanCover.com](http://BeerCanCover.com) "because you would never want anyone to think you would drink anything else" or a handy product holder at [HandyHolder.com](http://HandyHolder.com) – at no or at low cost. Ask for consumer feedback from "you who

understand the Internet and our product”.

During the Super Bowl television viewers had a special interest in community. All those party people were just waiting to be asked to join up -- to pay membership fees, even. People with the "spirits" of the game would have ordered, and paid for, brand items, advertising items. "Hey guys, let's go online and order tee shirts that say ...” Any college student can suggest slogans for you to use. Online services imprint products immediately as they are ordered (without an inventory) via the link to them on your web page. They handle all paperwork and shipping. You set the price, so that your customers pay enough to give your business a profit, if you want one.

And consumers increasingly like to shop online. Excitement about a successful Internet hunt for a product, coupled with weariness of that hunt, can even lead them to spend more money online than in stores. Send these consumers right away to where they can get your product online. If the big books-etcetera online company sells it, is there really any harm in giving them the link of that company, so they can immediately order your product there? You will earn a commission, as that company will track where the sales originated. The customer is motivated now; use that motivation now.

Maybe, just maybe, a web page can be a place to record a million email addresses -- even a million snail mail addresses. Web visitors will leave such information if asked in the right way, e.g., “Leave your name and your email address here if you think our commercial is way cool.” People who would never mail away, or even telephone, for a sample product will leave their snail mail and email addresses at a web page to get it mailed to them. And think of ways to get return customer visits, if you want them.

Now that you've given them a reason to visit your web page, what else gets them to visit?

- 1) Tell them to visit.
- 2) Help them remember how to get there.
- 3) Give them a reason to visit.
- \* 4) Attract them with more than one web address.

It is SoLastCentury.com to register only one, obsessively-considered web address. You can register and use many.

It is surprising that multiple web addresses for the same web page are much more common for lower-budget advertising programs. A web page can have several web addresses leading to it, different consumers can type in different web addresses to arrive at the same web page.

Or those different web addresses can lead to different web pages -- for the same product or service, but with differing types of language and presentation to appeal to different categories of consumers and different personality types. Web addresses can, thus, allow for multi-targeted branding online.

Web addresses can even give a route to an alternative commercial for those who consider themselves too sophisticated for your television commercial -- what an opportunity! "Too high brow for this silliness; go to [OurSophisticatedCommercial.com](http://OurSophisticatedCommercial.com)." Or use well and fully [LowCarbBeers.com](http://LowCarbBeers.com) -- but gather the opposition at [LowCarbBeersSuck.com](http://LowCarbBeersSuck.com), where you offer another of your products.

Register more web addresses than simply your trademarks.

Register your brand name and use it as a web address, sure, but also use other relevant and memorable web addresses that consumers will remember. Remember that a "letterhead" web address is probably not enticing. Even when a brand is well-known it can be a tremendous asset to use additional web addresses beyond the trademark.

Consumers at a keyboard may not be thinking of your brand, but may replay the web page name in their head -- if it is a memorable name that reminds them of what you want them to be reminded, like [Pet-FriendlyHotels.com](http://Pet-FriendlyHotels.com). And you might try the direct approach: even a hurried voice-over: "Coupon at [YourProductCoupon.com](http://YourProductCoupon.com)" would attract the curious and would be remembered.

A web page is not a multi-million dollar advertisement or brand concept -- It's a flier that can be changed. And you don't even print out copies, so there is little expense to change a word or all of it. So change the reason to visit the web page whenever you want.

Web addresses can change; so can web pages, as often as you want them to. You can refer to a current event. There are constantly-changing news and stock web pages, to be sure. And then there are the generally static and unchanging consumer product web pages.. There is no need for that dichotomy. When the vice president misspelled "tomato", if tomatoes were related to your product (and the Internet as easy to use as it is today) you could have added a domain name with "tomato" (or "tomatoe") in it, quickly made its web page and linked to it via paid online web ads as well as from your other web pages and television and radio ads. The wire services might have picked it up from the Internet and given you lots of free publicity, for the product as well as for your creativity.

Use an alternate web address for any product  
that most people cannot easily spell correctly.

Your web address is not a lesson for consumers to pass before they can enter your web page. Everyone cannot spell your product name. Think of the drug brands your family uses and decide if you can reach their web pages the first time you try. Doctors know that few people, even those sophisticated about their drugs' purposes and even their side effects, can say correctly the names of their medications. Don't make it easier for consumers to go to a web page about side effects, that contrasts your product with those of competitors, than to your own, supportive web page.

All those pediatricians with the many syllables in their names that start with a "K" go by "Dr. K"; one can register [MyDoctorK.com](http://MyDoctorK.com) -- before anyone else does - and have a better web address than the others, that is appropriate and memorable.



Use web addresses for more fluid branding.

Are web addresses brands? Yes. And no. Yes, web addresses offer advantages of brands. No, web addresses do not have many of the disadvantages of brands, as we commonly think of them.

Memorable web addresses make great new names for specific products and services and can even spark major branding without the huge investment of naming professionals. These are brands without the weight, as new brands can be tried on the Internet without tremendous cost and without embarrassing risk. These new names can be used for one advertising effort that need not be repeated, or can live on as major brands.

The brand is the web address and the web address is the brand.

When we shop on the Internet we in fact shape our own brand awareness. Unsure of the size of a company (you can't tell that from a web page) the small guys can show they are just as good as the bigger guys, and the big guys can show they are just as good as the smaller guys. We Internet shoppers trust our own evaluation more. We found just what we were looking for. The web page we found was exactly the right shop for us. It becomes a brand that means something good to us -- if the web page has a memorable name that it makes very clear to us.

Have you got web page visitors?

Okay, you've done it all: 1) told consumers to visit your web pages, 2) helped them remember how to get to them, 3) given them a reason to visit, and 4) attracted them with more than one web address.

What did you get? Well, you might have gotten television viewers who went to the Internet and voluntarily decided to visit web addresses mentioned in your commercials - what a powerful advance in brand awareness!

Those television viewers may be thinking, "Now that the crowd has gone and I'm alone, I can check out that new sexual functioning drug. Hmm, what was its name? I couldn't write it down during the Super Bowl party, could I? Oh, I remember, the commercial said to check 24HourImpotenceDrug.com! Here it is. And there's a list of doctors and a coupon." or "I need to get some things delivered, what was that name the guys were laughing about? Oh, TruckedUp.com" or "Where can I get pictures online for the school project? I know there's a fee, but I need this quick. Here it is, SeePeople.com!" The name doesn't have to refer to your main advertising theme. QuickCoolWine.com alone would add a whole dimension to a commercial for wine in cans (Australia has it) and that web address can take customers directly to the usual web page for the wine, with lots of features to encourage sales.

Those examples are most likely not at all relevant to your product or service. But surely ideas will occur to you that you can do for your brand with web addresses and web pages. Go ahead -- do them.

## What else should brand people consider now with reference to web addresses and web pages?

1) Don't think that search engines remove the need for memorable web addresses.

Do search engines make web addresses less important? No, actually they make it even more important to use memorable domain names.

Ebay, Google and Amazon - they work as names for services that work for us and as names that we remember. They are web addresses and brand names in one. We remember them. We do not have to use a search engine to find Google. When we do use a search engine to search for search engines, we find competitive search engines that also interest us and may distract us. But we don't use a search engine to find Google, because we remember its name, its domain name and web address.

At the mall we often need to leave a shop before buying. When we return, if we cannot remember the name of the shop and how to get there, we search for it. We have lots of branding signs to help us and relatively few shoe shops and all look different to us, so we may find the shop we want. If all the shops look the same and all the names of the shops sound the same, we look again, this time not for the shop, but for the shoes we found before. And we may buy our shoes at a different shop.

On the Internet the situation is the same -- except that the shops are many, many more in number and all are invisible, appearing before us only when we arrive at them. So when we look again for the shoes we want, we may end up buying our shoes at a different online store - - unless we remember that the store we liked was called HipShod.com. We remember the name and immediately know how to get to that online store. We remember the name because we noticed it on the web page and because we found it memorable.

When satisfied consumers find products and services they like, they try to go back to the same web address when they are ready to buy. But that second search by even those prior customers can lead to a different web page from the one they wanted, because they can't remember the web address where they shopped before.

A really good web address guarantees the return of a larger percentage of satisfied customers, as well as those new customers they refer.

Search engines are effective in sending motivated traffic for a first-time visit. But search engines beget fickleness. Google seems so fast that many of us do not remember to keep or search our web browser "favorites" or "history". The search engine itself becomes our friend, our department store, our brand, rather than brand being the individual product or service and its web address. That's okay with Google, who needs you to forget where you went before so you will have to come back to Google and search again. A memorable web address changes that -- we go directly to the web page we want.

One reason search engines have become so important in Internet sales is that of late many have overlooked the power of the memorable web address both in branding and in

attracting web page visitors and bringing them back.

Do not let the major portal to your web pages be a search engine. As Internet viruses are seen to affect search engines, we find a new reason not to depend on already inefficient and costly search engines for all your web page visitors.

This discussion of search engines applies to online businesses -- but all businesses are online businesses, whether sales take place via the Internet or not. That bears repeating: all businesses today are online businesses

## 2) Realize how web addresses can stand alone.

Use interesting web addresses to attract consumers to your web page -- or to simply attract attention, even if you don't need web page visitors to accomplish your goals. Major impact can come from a few words. Just writing a web address sets it apart from other text; the "dot com" highlights it, so "OurFunnyWebPage.com" might help your image even if no one were ever to visit the web page.

A web address is a perfect opportunity for a slogan -- a slogan that can be short-term - branding without the long-term decisions of brand changes. Change your web pages all the time. Television commercials are getting more up-to-the-minute, and certainly web pages can do that - and more easily.

## 3) Forget the website concept.

With several web addresses, you can discontinue thinking that you must have one large company website composed of web pages that fit together well, cover all traditional content for a website and are "published" infrequently. Web pages need not be pages in an online company book at all. Having all your online traffic go to one overall company site is like using one brand for all your products and is not necessary. And you can decide to link all web pages to one another and to your other products or services, or not.

## 4) Use web addresses for multi-corporation advertising.

You can link to a jelly web page if you sell peanut butter, even if the jelly is made by another company. The web address LowCarbGroceryList.com would provide a place for your low carb beer to be advertised, but also for other low carb products to be listed, paying you to be listed. Customers print off the grocery list from your web page and from those of other products included on the list, other companies paying you for the privilege of being listed. Customers purchase low carb pasta and see on their grocery list that your low carb beer is recommended as a beverage for the meal. Recipes and menus are on the back, also featuring your low carb beer. The web address can be used temporarily: low carb obsession goes away -- the web page goes away, and the web address is not renewed. (And remember that taking actions now with web addresses can help the low carb craze continue, as it can forever, as consumers are taught to eat carbs again, but in special items only.)

As with other supplies, web address ownership does not mean you have to use them -- now, or ever. Ordering stationery that is never used is not a crime; neither is it a terrible mistake to register web addresses that you never use. If you think Amscray.com is a great name for removing spam, you can register it now, whether you use it for your company now, or not.

5) Put your marker on domain names of possible interest to you.

The web address word, words or slogan are yours. Those letters in that order, with the dotcom, cannot be used by anyone else and probably no one will want to use them without the dotcom. Someone else interested in that web address slogan who researches it will discover that you have already registered it, even if you are not directing traffic to that web address to any web page. You can effectively put your marker on a web address you like and save it, to consider using later.

6) Find exceptions to all the advice given above, but not to this -- register domain names now!

UnsolicitedAdvice.com -- do as you think best with your web addresses and web pages, but do think. After all, there are few great English web addresses remaining unregistered.

That's not surprising, given that there are only 26 English letters -- and only a very limited number of combinations of those letters that make any sense for any specific use. That's like having available in the entire English-speaking world only one sign that says the name of your product or company, or what you want to convey in a web address. And there may be a lot of other English-speaking businesses like yours, who want similar web addresses.

Therefore a web address that is both memorable and that makes some reference to your product is a very valuable asset to have. That situation is becoming more apparent to some advertisers now, and the rest will have to catch up -- try to catch up.

How does anyone go about obtaining domain names?

It is easy to buy and to register a web address/domain name.

1) Decide who will select, buy and register web addresses for your product or service.

If the people who are registering your company's web addresses are technology or legal staff, major advertising decisions are being made by people with only one, albeit valuable, perspective. The registration of web addresses should be led by people with knowledge of the power of Internet names. They should understand how web pages are used and how the web address itself influences web page use. They should understand the product and who the likely buyers are. They should be able to make decisions about advertising.

Is there within your company a person with understanding of the overall goal (sell more) as well as of the perspectives of advertising, sales, marketing, public relations, legal, and management?

2) Decide whether you need a committee to make web address decisions.

Web address choice may be the only thing done well only by committee. The vision, time and budget of any one department -- public relations, technology, legal, branding, marketing or even advertising may be too limited for domain name decisions that take the miscellaneous factors into account, so a committee composed of personnel from those departments might be even better. If a committee is not indicated, consider a person who is a good problem-solver, who can grasp and appreciate the end goal, who can use input from an outside consultant and also process input from various departments and who has access to key people in all departments.

A major reason there are appropriate domain names still available, awaiting their big-business end user is the lack of sophistication of advertisers and the insufficient communication and knowledge-sharing between personnel with differing job functions within one company.

(And please consider a committee for decisions about web page content and design as well.)

3) Remember that the cost of web addresses is a small component of any advertising or branding program.

Their relatively small cost is perhaps one reason that web addresses are overlooked in the way that other small items are minimized in budgets, and, thus, seen as less important projects.

The cost of Internet web addresses, even when bought from a reseller, is a small part of any reasonably-sized advertising campaign. And, once bought, web addresses can be re-registered annually for a minimal fee and can be resold in the future, when it will most likely have gained in value.

A one-page print ad appearing for one day in a major newspaper or a sign for one building where the public is not wanted will cost thousands -- a good web address attracts attention and increases sales much more and is infinitely more valuable.

4) Remember that buying a series of letters that has been previously registered is to be expected at this time in domain name acquisition.

Are we actually suggesting you buy second-hand domain names? Yes, of course. It is SoTenMinutesAgo.com for advertising agencies to think that they are not being creative if they need to buy a domain name from someone who has pre-registered it. It's the actual use of the name that is creative this century, not its initial registration.

The controversy about domain squatting -- that was about trademarks, which are protected -- and not about the legitimate buying and selling of legitimate domain names of this century. Do not fear buying domain names from resellers, and, please, don't let misplaced

ego cause you to miss the boat.

5) Remind other personnel that web addresses have other functions as well.

When considering the purchase prices of domain names, or when proposing to management that domain names be purchased, remember that the real value of a web address goes way beyond its value as an address or a brand. Your domain names implement numerous other important functions for your company -- with respect to marketing, advertising, customer services, human resources, and clerical departments.

6) Think of the many ways a web address can be helpful to a business.

The value of a web address simply as a brand is priceless.

However, a web address can also provide a web street address, a shop name, a "yellow pages" listing, a company name, a name to imply trademark, a directory of personnel, as well as a place for people to leave messages, place orders, see your merchandise, read warranties and product information, and leave complaints.

A web address provides a place to gather addresses of customers and potential customers and names of suppliers; a place to provide free samples and printable coupons; a place to give children a game or other activity that promotes your product or service; a place to give information for press releases and links to places where your product can be bought.

A web address provides a place for potential new employees to list their names and qualifications, a place for the outside world to most easily and cheaply contact the correct person or department of your company (cutting down on secretarial expense), a place for the company credo to be displayed, a place for the company advertising to be seen. A web address is a tax-deductible business expense when one is needed.

After all, a web address is a place for you to imply ownership of your product type and establish superiority.

7) Remember that any registrant can sell any web address in the future.

Your company, as registrant of a web address, can sell it in the future to another business or individual. Extra web addresses bought now and never used can be resold -- that's also income that affects the bottom line.

8) Go ahead: find a domain name (web address) you might want to use.

There is a need for a good, more searchable central registry of web addresses. Google could do it easily, and MainDo.com is one domain name available for such a registry. Ebay could do it, but may not realize how and why. This makes it hard to discover domain names that might be appropriate for your product or service. Use of a domain name consultant can be of tremendous assistance, especially while we await simplification of the process of finding domain names.

Many registrants of web addresses, who may have registered them for a never-realized purpose or for potential use by clients who chose another direction, will sell them rather than hold on to them. In fact, some registrants will sell their web address to you even if they are currently using that web address, just as smaller companies will sometimes sell their brick and mortar real estate to a large department store.

Domain name resellers have registered many domain names they think someone will want to buy from them. Their domain name lists can serve a purpose, exposing you to other possible domain names that you have not considered.

#### 9) Consider using a domain name consultant.

Some very good professional naming people have, of course, been attracted to the new frontier of Internet naming. Some of these have registered multiple domain names when searching for the right name for a client or product and now make those domain names available to the public, as well as offer consultation for the process of choosing appropriate domain names.

The professional domain name consultant helps you with choosing web addresses. She is not a web page designer or Internet hosting company and is not the person to contact regarding computer issues.

You have the knowledge of your own product and of your business goals. The professional domain name consultant provides an outsider's perspective, experience with Internet naming and a focus on the psychological factors that make web addresses and web pages work best.

That consultant may be able to register multiple domain names for you to consider, without charge. She may receive payment for her services only through sales to you of those names you select. In addition, many excellent targeted and memorable domain names are pre-registered and held in inventory by most domain name professionals and those can be bought as well.

Note: Both the availability of a domain name and information about its current registrant can be found easily online. For more about our this, please see Appendix Two.

### Branding professionals, lead the way!

#### 1) Consider registering domain names for current and future clients right now.

Should branding professionals and advertising agencies themselves register web addresses they think might be of future use to their clients? Should they select domain names that current clients need and encourage them to register them?

No one is now saying companies are restricting the business of competitors by registering numerous domain names relevant to their area of business. Competitors in fact are unaware of the value to them of owning such web addresses. This is like a time during

which those aware of the limited supply of oceanfront property buy it, to be used profitably or resold later.

Non-trademark domain names can be bought by anyone. Registration of domain names by the advertising department of a business seems to make sense. And advertising agencies will want to register domain names relevant to the needs of their current and future clients. However, any business can change its choice of advertising agency and will come to realize it doesn't want its future web address options limited by an advertising agency now representing a competitor. There is an interesting future coming.

Please remember that the price of domain names is lower now than it will be in the future as awareness spreads about the increasing importance of domain names -- and their decreasing availability.

## 2) Register domain names for your own brand business now.

Advertising people -- please consider registration of domain names for your own business use. Don't neglect your own Internet presence.

Registration of appropriate and creative domain names is lacking by those who might well model the use of great web addresses -- advertising and branding people. Check out the web addresses of your competitors.

Use of appropriate generic web addresses, e.g., FilmProductPlacement.com or CoCreationAdvertising.com can have major impact, even when simply written on a business card.

Enough said?

Bring your web addresses and web pages up to date:  
**SoThisCentury.com!**

Someone has her fingers on a computer keyboard, ready to go somewhere online, voluntarily, feeling not coerced but eager to learn. Will she find your web pages?

Note: An effort was made to avoid using product-affiliated web addresses within this article: all domain names cited were available for registration/purchase at time of submission, except Whols.com and those below.

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Dr. Griffith's ideas about naming in advertising and her web address consultation services are online at OneBigRoach.com. Domain names she has designed and pre-registered can



be seen at GrowPuppy.com. Susan@OneBigRoach.com

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### Appendix One: Regarding Internet terminology used in this article

Although many small business people are rather Internet-savvy, most branding professionals do not have a lot of time to browse the Internet, and many are, understandably, not fluent in Internet terminology. Many words are used interchangeably in Internet jargon. That is as it should be. This is not computer programming. This is calling a telephone a "phone" and a number a "digit" -- don't worry about the differences.

Herein, for simplicity, we will use the words web page, web address, and domain name.

A web page is what you see on your computer screen when you arrive at a web address. It is also called a page of a "website" or "web site"; some may be called "homepages" (the first page seen at a web address). "Surfing the Internet" is looking for and at web pages that are accessible to your computer.

When looking at one web page you can use your mouse to get to another web page by "clicking" on a "link", that is a word or icon that is associated with that new web page address. Otherwise, without a link, you need to know the web address of a web page to get to it. You use the one-line window of your computer's web browser as a place to type in the letters of a web address. A web address is written `http://www.WebAddress.com` but web addresses are also correctly written simply as: `WebAddress.com`.

For practical purposes a web address is the same thing as a URL and is also called a domain name, especially when initially registered. Once registered, like most telephone numbers, a domain name can be yours indefinitely, if the renewal fee is paid each year. Many domain names are already registered by someone else who may be willing to sell them to you through simple transfer-of-registrant paperwork and payment of an agreed-upon fee. At this time we are awaiting simplification of the process of finding domain names (web addresses) that are appropriate and available. In the meantime, use of a domain name consultant can be of tremendous assistance.

### Appendix Two: How to check to see if a web address has been registered and, if so, by whom

Typing in a web address lets you know whether a functional web page is currently linked to that web address; it does NOT tell you whether that web address has been registered by someone.

Go to [Whols.com](http://Whols.com). Under "Easy Domain Lookup" enter into the box the domain name in which you have an interest, without the .com, leaving the ".com" visible in the second box. Press "go". On the page that appears, you will be told if the domain name is available for registration. If it is available, you can register it at [Whols.com](http://Whols.com) or at a number of other domain name registrars.

If the domain name is not available, click on the words WHOIS LOOKUP at the bottom of the page, although they are not underlined. You will see contact information for the current registrant.

If the name is unavailable, you can offer to buy it from the current registrant, either through a domain resale service or through the owner at the email address given in the Whois Lookup.