

Our “Learfield” Name

We incorporated as "Missouri Network, Inc." in November of 1972; never expecting to grow beyond the boundaries of the state. We'd outgrown the state of Missouri for our Ag Network with affiliates in bordering Illinois, Iowa and Arkansas. So, we used the "Missourinet" name for our new news network covering Missouri, and took Derry Brownfield's name for our ag network. But what name should we use for the Corporation?

What makes a good name? Distinctiveness--will it be remembered? Is it dissimilar from all the others? Can it be easily "cleared" legally; that is: are there other products or services with names too similar? Can it last for years or can it become dated? And finally, what attitude does the name conjure when first heard by an average customer?

To accomplish this, I used the ["Q-Sort"](#) methodology developed by Missouri professor, William Stephenson. I collected hundreds of name ideas for our company from employees, friends and customers and put each on a card and then had these same people rate the names from best to worst; the winning name was "Learfield Communications".

I still have those cards someplace. Some of the ideas were terrible; many were trendy, but would quickly grow out of date. And some would have proved impossible to clear as a nationally-used service mark because others were using it or something similar. Of course, "Learfield" is a combination of "Lear" and the -field from Derry's last name. Interestingly, there aren't any others similar out there; it has proved easily clearable; google-it if you don't believe me. It's a top-notch name.

October 20, 2008