

OVERUSED LOCATION WORDS



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TEXT: MS. ANITA BROSER, IMAGE: ENDMARK



ACROSS: IF YOU HAD TO NAME A SHOPPING CENTER, HOW WOULD YOU BEGIN? WHAT WOULD YOU PAY ATTENTION TO?

SAMLAND: In principle, the same requirements apply to naming a shopping center as other brands, with one important difference: Generally this is a "unique" product. These requirements can be easily summarized as unique (different from others), authentic (purely English names are rarely credible in the German speaking world, for example), and easy to remember (and to pronounce).

I would definitely start by researching whether there are (some-what known) local reference points based on the location and its history or the architecture, while not coming across as too provincial. I would avoid the overused "location words" as well as abbreviations. Abbreviations are not only mixed up easily, they simply do not have personality and are not very easy to search for online.

ACROSS: CAN YOU THINK OF A FEW GOOD NAMES FOR SHOPPING CENTERS? AS A BRAND-NAMING SPECIALIST, WHICH CENTER NAMES APPEAL TO YOU?

SAMLAND: If there is a small location-specific hook, invented names can make sense and be helpful, like, for example CentrO in Oberhausen or Atrio in Villach. They can also be monopolized, i.e. protected as a wordmark. The combination of uniqueness

and local color, such as the Colonaden in Cologne, works especially well, even though this name seems very much inspired by my (older) name creation Coloneum for the major film and TV studios in northern Cologne. Of course there are also groups of local names that should be avoided, such as Hanse names in Hamburg and Bremen or Danube names in Linz and Vienna.

ACROSS: ARE THERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NAMING A PRODUCT AND A SHOPPING CENTER?

SAMLAND: As mentioned earlier, there are many commonalities, except for the fact that the product name has to work everywhere, while a shopping center name is only in one place. However, it has to be as clear and simple as possible.

ACROSS: SHOULD THE NAME SOMEHOW INDICATE THE FUNCTION OF THE BUILDING OR THE RETAIL OFFER, OR CAN THAT BE DONE WITH A CLAIM?

SAMLAND: If the building has or had a special function or architectural feature, this can be incorporated into the name, but it doesn't have to be. The retail offer, on the other hand, should definitely not influence the name, because this could change and then in some cases the name has to be changed. A good, positioning claim can be helpful in the localization and in communicating the offer.

ACROSS: DOES A SHOPPING CENTER NEED A CLAIM AT ALL?

SAMLAND: Here the answer is also not original: It depends. First of all, no claim is better than a bad claim. After all, successful retail companies get by without any claim at all, like Aldi and Hofer. With a new opening, though, a claim can be very helpful, especially if it focuses on the shopping center's USP.

ACROSS: HOW MUCH DOES THE NAME INFLUENCE THE APPEAL OF THE PRODUCT, OR, IN OUR CASE, THE SHOPPING CENTER?

SAMLAND: A name always influences the perceived appeal. That goes for product, places, and people alike. How much is naturally difficult to answer, because generally the relevant studies of published names are lacking a basis of comparison. When the name – and/or in combination with a claim – can successfully communicate the promise of a positive experience implicitly or explicitly, it certainly makes the shopping center more attractive. Names like SCN – Shopping Center Nord (Vienna) are generally less attractive than names like Waterfront (Bremen) or Mercado (Hamburg).



Of course a good name cannot make up for a poor offer, not enough parking, or unfavorable opening hours, and does not help long term. The name is primarily directed at new customers. If the customer has had a positive experience with the offer, then the meaning of the name becomes slightly secondary for him. This is why the name should especially spark curiosity for potential customers. Obviously this is easier with something "newer" rather than a familiar old name.

