



## Radio programme about BRAND NAMES



**Interviewer:** Good afternoon. This is *Uncommon Knowledge*, the programme that looks at everyday things from unusual angles. Today we're talking to the Creative Director of a company that names companies and products.

**John:** Hello Sarah.

**I:** Now tell us. How do companies choose their names? Are they usually named after the people who start them?

**J:** Well sometimes. Many companies are named after their founders, for example the Swedish furniture company IKEA. The first two letters in IKEA - the I and the K - are the initials of Ingvar Kamprad, the company's founder.

**I:** And what about the last two letters, the E and the A? What do they stand for?

**J:** The E is for Elmtaryd, which is the name of the farm where Ingvar Kamprad grew up.

**I:** And the A?

**J:** The A is for the name of a village near his hometown, called Agunnaryd. I'm not quite sure exactly why this village was important to him, but obviously it was.

**I:** I always assumed that 'ikea' was a Swedish word with some sort of special meaning.

**J:** Ah I'm afraid not. But many other companies choose names which have specific meanings. For example, Samsung, the big Korean electronics company.

**I:** What does Samsung mean?

**J:** In Korean, Samsung means 'three stars'. The name was chosen back in the year 1938, and at that time three stars was the most impressive rating that people could imagine for hotels and things like that.

**I:** So if they'd started the company today, they would probably have called it 'five stars' - whatever that is in Korean.

**J:** Absolutely. In any case the company was very different in its early days. For instance, in the beginning, in 1938, Samsung wasn't an electronics company. It was a company that sold fish and vegetables, and fruit to China. It didn't start selling electronics until the 1970s.

**I:** Oh really? I didn't know that.



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**J:** And another brand name with a special meaning is Nike, the American company which is famous for its trainers and sports clothes.

**I:** I think I know this one. Nike is the Greek goddess of victory,. Is that right?

**J:** Yes, that's right. What's interesting is that 'Nike' wasn't the company's original name. When it started in 1964, its original name was Blue Ribbon Sports. They changed their name to Nike a few years later in 1971.

**I:** Very interesting.

**J:** Yes. And another company with an interesting name is Sony, the Japanese electronics company. Sony is a combination of 'sonus', the latin word for sound, and 'sonny', an American slang term that means 'boy'.

**I:** 'Sound' plus 'boy'.

**J:** That's right. They chose it because it has an interesting meaning and it's easy for people all over the world to pronounce. Obviously that's an important thing for a business name.

**I:** One more question, this time about the American internet company, Google. The name has something to do with numbers, I think.

**J:** That's right. 'Googol' is a word for a very large number: a one followed by 100 zeroes.

**I:** Really? That's quite hard to visualize.

**J:** The name shows that there is a huge amount of information online, and you can find it all by Googling it.

**I:** Yes. It's a really good name for a search engine.

**J:** Yes, indeed. Now, of course, the spelling is different. 'Google' the company is G-O-O-G-L-E, but the number is spelled 'G-O-O-G-O-L. But that's where the name comes from.

**I:** Fascinating. Thanks very much for speaking with us this afternoon.

**J:** You're very welcome.



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Find the English for the following words and phrases in the interview above (the words are underlined in the dialogue):

inhabituel:

meuble:

il a grandi:

à l'évidence, évidemment:

par exemple: or

ils vendaient du poisson: they

jusqu'aux années 1970:

quelques années plus tard:

un mot d'argot américain:

Que signifient/représentent les lettres A et E? What do the letters A and E ?

le classement le plus impressionnant:

dans tous les cas:

dans le monde entier:

une énorme quantité d'informations:

Je ne suis pas vraiment sûre:

J'ai bien peur que non.

Je ne savais pas cela:

C'est bien ça?

Oui, en effet.

J'ai toujours supposé que:

Je crois que je connais celle-ci:

## Verb tenses:

Beaucoup d'autres entreprises **choisissent** des noms spécifiques:

Many other companies specific names.

Ils **ont choisi** ce nom:

They this name.

Le nom **a été choisi** en 1938.

The name in 1938.



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