The story that follows is true. Only the names have been changed, or omitted, to protect the innocent (especially your diakneust, or editor).

Some time ago, a large industrial corporation, identified in the public mind with fuels, doing business in many of the countries of the world, both English-speaking nations and others, was faced with the need for devising a new marketing name for one of its principal products. The company decided that the new brand name or trademark ought to reflect, as accurately as possible, the image that it wanted to project to the public of itself and of its products. The corporate mentality thereupon went into action and formulated a series of standards to which the new product name should conform, including a variety of meanings that it should convey to anyone seeing the name in print or hearing it mentioned. The conditions imposed on the desired name are so interesting that we reproduce them here in full:

1. The name should be a one-word name, quite short. Preferably, the name should be spelled with four or five letters, though a six-letter name would be acceptable.
2. The name should be distinctive, easily remembered by the public.
3. It should be original, not one already being used by another company, either for itself or as a trademark or brand name.
4. For some obscure reason, the name must not contain the letter “S” with the letter “O” appearing later on in the name.
5. The name must suggest the idea of energy or of power, consistent with its application to fuel products.
6. The name should suggest large size, even immensity, in the following specific areas:
   a. the number of people employed by the company;
   b. the number of its retail outlets;
   c. the number of its plants and facilities.

WORD WAYS

Having done the desired name over to a firm of 12 or 15 names, the corporation, Words are exultant with them. Yet, the experts and cybernetics have to be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple, not be absurd! The experts must be simple,
(7) The name should suggest financial soundness relative to these specific factors:
   (a) the financial world;
   (b) company resources;
   (c) public stockholders.

(8) The name should suggest diversification in terms of supplying basic product needs to almost all other industries, and in terms of supplying a line of consumer products appealing to all economic and social groups.

(9) The name should suggest stability combined with progressiveness in terms of experimental research resulting in quality products for both industry and consumer.

(10) The name should suggest a scientifically and technologically oriented and motivated corporation.

(11) The name should suggest the idea of benevolence in terms of public welfare, of employee relations, and of stockholder returns.

(12) Since the corporation was operating on a world-wide basis, the name should have an "international" flavor, and convey the associations just enumerated in all the principal languages.

(13) The name must not, accidentally, convey any negative, unpleasant, or otherwise unfortunate associations in any language of consequence.

Having done an excellent job of formulating the conditions with which the desired name was to comply, the corporation turned the list of conditions over to a firm of experts, delegating to these experts the task of creating some 12 or 15 names all of which would meet those conditions, and from which the corporation would eventually select one name for actual use.

Words are extremely flexible tools, and it is often possible to work wonders with them. Yet, there is a limit to everything, and it would take an absolute magician to concoct a word or name of 4 or 5 letters conforming to all of the stipulations laid down by that corporation. A few letters of the alphabet simply cannot tell a tale as complex as the one dreamt up by the company, subject to innumerable restrictions, duplicated in numerous languages. On the other hand, the needs and wants of an industrial giant must be served—if you don't, someone else will. What, then, were the experts confronted with this ridiculous problem to do?

The experts consulted other experts—in language, psychology, word puzzles, and cybernetics. It soon became clear that the conditions enumerated would have to be simplified considerably. First of all, the separate shades of meaning must be forgotten. Names such as MAGNION, GEONEX, and SOLARC suggest great size, but no word can possibly suggest the three specific factors of many employees, many retail outlets, and many plants and facilities. Let's not be absurd! Similarly, names such as SAINT, BONNE, or LIBERA might suggest benevolence, but no name is capable of elaborating upon that basic idea to connect it specifically with public welfare activities, excellent employee
relations, and bountiful returns to stockholders. Why, merely postulating such distinctions is preposterous!

Secondly, it would probably be necessary to eliminate some of the conditions and combine others. Thus, the ideas of size and energy are closely related ones, and whatever there is about a name that suggests the one will often also suggest the other, so that we are dealing here with two aspects of one factor. In like fashion, it can be reasoned that, in today's world, science and progress are inextricably intertwined, so that any name projecting a scientific image also suggests progress. On the other hand, ideas such as those of stability, financial soundness, and diversification are so difficult to project in a name that the chances of combining them with all of the other relevant characteristics are just about nil, and there is no point in even trying.

Thirdly, the problem of devising names conveying the same associations in all of the chief world languages is clearly beyond solution, and must be reduced to something manageable. The Indo-European language family embraces all of the principal languages spoken in Europe, North America, South America, and Australia. It seems possible to find word elements common to most of the Indo-European languages, and to fabricate a name from such elements that will convey similar associations in these languages. More specifically, there are many Latin and Greek word elements that have entered what Webster's Third Edition calls the "International Scientific Vocabulary," and that will be recognized by educated speakers of most Indo-European languages, as well as by scientifically-minded persons of some other languages. Concentrating on the use of word elements included in the "International Scientific Vocabulary" will, therefore, represent the closest approach practically possible to the corporation's objective. The sweeping generality stipulated by that company is, of course, utterly impossible of attainment—no word or name can possibly convey the same associations in English, Russian, Arabic, Hindustani, Chinese, and Japanese. What is manifestly impossible need not be attempted.

Fourthly, the requirement of originality is almost impossible to satisfy. The ideas that are to be built into the desired name—size, power, scientific orientation, progressiveness, and benevolence—are ideas that many companies want their names and those of their products also to reflect. The number of such companies and products is far greater than the number of suitable English words and word elements conveying this handful of ideas. As a result, most of the pathways leading to the desired result have already been traveled by others. Even a reasonably exhaustive search will only now and then turn up useful words and word elements that seem to have been overlooked by all predecessors. What can be accomplished in practice is to find names not identical with names already in use; names original technically, if not in spirit.

From the foregoing considerations, there begins to emerge a profile of the names that must be sought. To satisfy the corporation within the bounds of reason, it is necessary to construct names that are very short, consist of scientific word elements drawn from Latin and/or Greek, and concentrate on conveying the ideas of great size and energy, science combined with progress, and benevolence. The names should be original and distinctive to whatever extent may be checked against the ultimate dictionary used to weed out important languages to be included.

Thus, an attempt at a solution, if not really practical, is postulated.

In our nomenclature, a solution is possible—just not practically evaluable it appears.
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erge a profile of within the bounds short, consist of and concentrate on involved with progress, cative to whatever extent may be possible. Proposed names that satisfy these conditions must be checked against comprehensive lists of existing company and product names to weed out any that already exist, and against dictionaries of all the major languages to eliminate any that have clearly undesirable associations in some important languages.

Thus, an impossible problem has been transformed into one which, hopefully, is possible of solution.

In our next issue, we shall take one of the names actually proposed as a solution to the problem, delving into the curious research required to evaluate it properly.

... A MODEL DEFINITION

Not all dictionary definitions are as clear, as explanatory, as helpful as the dictionary user would want them to be. Consequently, it is with a feeling of genuine pleasure that we point to the following definition as an example of the ultimate in lucidity, leaving nothing unsaid. The definition is from the Glossary of Geology and Related Sciences (American Geological Institute, Washington, 1957, First Edition), and the original source is given as U.S.G.S. Professional Paper 228, page 150, by Charles B. Hunt, published in 1954:

"CACTOLITH. A quasi-horizontal chonolith composed of anastomosing duc·toliths, whose distal ends curl like a harpolith, thin like a sphenolith, or bulge discordantly like an akmolith or ethmolith."

May all dictionary makers henceforth emulate this model of the perfect definition!

... EXPAND THE UN!

One of the most urgent needs in today's world is that of new, original, inspired ideas. Logologists must contribute their rightful share of such ideas if the world is to progress. Here is our thought for the day.

Let us make the United Nations more truly representative of the world's peoples by expanding its membership to include Antarcitca, giving that land a permanent seat in the Security Council, of course. Antarcitca, with an area of about five million square miles, is the largest land area in the entire world not now granted UN membership. In addition to its sheer size, there are other factors to consider: the lowest illiteracy rate in the world; a wealth of mineral resources; a strategic position athwart the air routes from Tasmania to Tierra del Fuego; and the finest location in the world from which to view the Southern Cross.

What nation will take the initiative in sponsoring membership in the UN for Antarcitca, a move obviously long overdue?

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