

The Name-in-Use Stress Test

Signature exercise · born from the Set and Signal case.

A name can be emotionally compelling and strategically interesting and still fail the only test that matters: **does it survive use?** It has to work repeatedly, in ordinary situations, often with no one there to explain it. This exercise puts a name (existing or proposed) into real language and grades how it behaves.

Step 1 — Drop the name into real sentences

Write your candidate name into every blank. Say each one out loud.

- Welcome to _____ .
- I'm the founder of _____ .
- _____ presents...
- A project by _____ .
- In partnership with _____ .
- Join the _____ community.
- The _____ method.
- The _____ team.
- Book a _____ session.
- Attend a _____ event.
- Subscribe to _____ .
- A new offering from _____ .
- _____'s approach to...
- I heard about _____ from...
- We worked with _____ on...
- This experience is part of _____ .
- The next chapter of _____ is...
- _____ helps people...
- The people who participate are called _____ .
- The different parts of the business are called _____ .

Step 2 — Score across five dimensions

Dimension	Question	1–5
Clarity	Does the name make the sentence easier or harder to understand?	
Speech	Is it easy and natural to say, repeatedly?	
Expansion	Can it support offerings, programs, content, events, partnerships?	
Vocabulary	Does it generate meaningful language, or does every extension feel forced?	
Organization	Does it help people understand how the parts of the business relate?	

Step 3 — The debrief question

Are you solving a communication problem, or has the communication problem exposed a business problem?

This is the question the whole Set and Signal case turns on. If the name fails mostly on **Speech/Clarity**, you may have a communication problem. If it fails on **Expansion/Vocabulary/Organization**, the name is likely exposing an unresolved *business* question — and a new name alone won't fix it.

Compare candidates

Run two or three names through the same sentences and score side by side. The winner is usually not the one that sounds best in isolation — it's the one that survives the twenty sentences and generates the most usable language.

	Name A	Name B	Name C
Clarity			

	Name A	Name B	Name C
Speech			
Expansion			
Vocabulary			
Organization			
Total			