Sometimes, your first choice is your best choice. And other times? Well, not so much. When you look at the original names of some iconic brands, it's clear some rebranding was necessary. From the search portal formerly known as David's and Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web to the origin story of Skype, read on to learn the hilarious original names of the brands we all know and love today.

We can all be glad we're telling people that we "Googled" someone today, instead of talking about how we just "Backrubbed" Britney Spears to find out how old she is.

## BackRub

Back in 1996, when Larry Page and Sergey Brin were working on creating what we now know as [Google](https://bestlifeonline.com/google/), they initially [called it](http://techland.time.com/2012/09/27/google-turns-14-today-was-initially-called-backrub/) Backrub—a nod to the way the search engine analyzed the web's "back links" to determine how important a site was. A year later, though, they decided they needed to upgrade to a name that indicated just how much data they were indexing—and eventually, they came up with Google, a take on the number "googolplex," which is the digit 1 followed by a googol zeroes (or 10100 zeroes).

## Tote'm

The first 7-Eleven [convenience store](https://corp.7-eleven.com/corp/about)—or at least, a makeshift storefront on a dock—cropped up in 1927 in Dallas, Texas, by Southland Ice Company employee John Jefferson Green. However, by 1937, Southland Ice Company founder Joe C. Thompson Jr. had decided that he liked the idea enough to expand it nationwide—and when he did, he did it under the name [Tote'm Stores](https://corp.7-eleven.com/corp/about). It wasn't until 1946 that the store was rebranded as 7-Eleven, an indication of their new extended [hours](https://bestlifeonline.com/myth-about-sleep/), 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week.

## Burbn

Believe it or not, the photo-sharing app [Instagram](https://bestlifeonline.com/speedos-cafe-most-instagrammable/) actually started out as Burbn. When creators Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger first created their app, they foresaw it as being a combination of elements of Foursquare and of Mafia Wars. They named it after [Systrom's favorite drink](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/07/instagram-used-to-be-called-brbn/373815/): Kentucky whiskey.

However, after deciding the app was too cluttered, they went back to the drawing board and chose to only keep the photo-sharing aspect of it. Due to these changes, they rebranded as Instagram, a combination of "instant" and "telegram," which Systrom thought "sounded camera-y," according to [*Inc.*](https://www.inc.com/eric-markowitz/life-and-times-of-instagram-the-complete-original-story.html)

## Brad's Drink

In 1893, Caleb Bradham developed a [carbonated soft drink](https://www.pepsistore.com/history.asp) in his drugstore in New Bern, North Carolina, one that he simply called Brad's Drink in honor of his surname. Five years later, Bradham rebranded to Pepsi-Cola, using the root of the word dyspepsia (meaning indigestion) because he believed his drink was a "healthy" soda that aided in digestion. Eventually, however, "cola" became the common noun for the carbonated soft drink—so these days, we're just left calling it "Pepsi."

## Pete's Super Submarines

When Fred DeLuca saw that submarine sandwiches were all the rage in the 1960s, he came up with the idea to open his own [submarine sandwich shop](https://www.subway.com/en-US/AboutUs/Timeline) in Bridgeport, Connecticut. With the financial assistance of family friend Dr. Peter Buck, he opened up his shop in 1965 and named it Pete's Super Submarines in Buck's honor. Apparently, DeLuca hoped to earn enough money in his brand-new sandwich business to pay his college tuition and eventually become a doctor, just like Buck.

Once the [business expanded](https://books.google.com/books?id=F22zCgAAQBAJpg=PA38lpg=PA38dq=pete's+submarines+pizza+marinessource=blots=8shSlUna8Ysig=ACfU3U2Luh68DZbgIQpue62pczIhdnJY8ghl=ensa=Xved=2ahUKEwjT8Yba6aXkAhXuguAKHfjeC4sQ6AEwDXoECAsQAQ" \l "v=onepageq=pete's submarines pizza marinesf=false), he shortened the name to Pete's Submarines—but when he was told that it sounded like "[pizza marines](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/16/business/fred-deluca-co-founder-of-subway-sandwich-chain-dies-at-67.html)" when broadcast over the radio, he shortened it even more to Pete's Subway. By 1968, the name of the shop was down to just Subway—and the rest, as they say, is history.

## Stag Party

Hugh Hefner founded the legendary men's lifestyle and entertainment magazine Playboy in 1953. Thankfully, though, an almost-lawsuit saved him from going with his original (and infinitely worse) name: Stag Party.

"I wanted to call the magazine Stag Party, influenced by a cartoon book that I had. I was looking for a male figure of some kind and I thought, 'An animal in tuxedo will set us apart,'" Hefner once revealed in an interview with [CNN](https://www.deccanherald.com/content/279906/i-wasnt-going-call-playboy.html). A month before the magazine first published, however, he received a letter from the lawyer of Stag magazine, claiming it was an infringement on their title. Hefner came up with a quick solution: "I was already having second thoughts about the title. So, at the very last minute, I changed the name and changed the image and called it Playboy."

## Blue Ribbon Sports

In 1964, University of Oregon track athlete Phil Knight and his coach, Bill Bowerman, founded [Blue Ribbon Sports](https://www.businessinsider.com/history-of-nike-facts-about-its-50th-anniversary-2014-11) (BRS) in order to distribute running shoes made by the Japanese company Onitsuka Tiger. Two years later, they opened their first retail store in Santa Monica, California, and expanded to the East Coast a year after that.

Then, in 1971, Jeff Johnson, the man who ran the company's East Coast factory, [mentioned](https://www.businessinsider.com/how-nike-got-its-name-2016-1) that all of the great brand names at the time consisted of a single [word](https://bestlifeonline.com/state-slang-words-quiz/) that was easy to remember. Similarly, they all included at least one "exotic" letter like Z, X or K. So, Johnson suggested Nike, the name of the winged goddess of victory, and Blue Ribbon Sports was no longer. "I've had one good idea in my life and this was it," he said, according to [*Runner's World*](https://www.runnersworld.com/advanced/a20792873/employee-number-one/).

## Cadabra

When Jeff Bezos founded what is now Amazon [in 1994](https://www.cnbc.com/2019/08/23/see-jeff-bezos-1994-job-listing-for-amazons-first-hire.html), he wanted to call it Cadabra, a shortened version of the oft-used magician's phrase "abracadabra." After his lawyer misheard it as the far less appealing "cadaver," though, he realized the business needed a change.

Back to the drawing board, Bezos wanted something that would capture the site's sheer scope and that [preferably started with the letter A](https://books.google.com/books?id=Nz43wixr2IcC&pg=PA47" \l "v=onepage&q=dictionary&f=false)  since, at the time, websites were listed alphabetically. After scanning the [dictionary](https://bestlifeonline.com/new-words-in-merriam-webster-dictionary/), he came upon Amazon. It was perfect: Not only did it start with an A, but it was also the name of the largest river in the world, indicating both size and volume.

## Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo

Sony started out in 1946 as a Tokyo electronics shop called [Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo K.K.](https://www.sony.net/SonyInfo/CorporateInfo/History/) (which translates to Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering Corporation).

When they decided to rename the company, they considered calling it TTK, but the railway company Tokyo Kyuko was already known by that acronym. They then considered just using the word Totsuko, but found that Americans had a hard time pronouncing it during a visit to the U.S. Finally, they landed on Sony, a mix of the Latin word ["sonus" for sound and "sonny,"](https://www.sony.com.hk/aboutsony/html/en/history.jsp) AKA a young, hip man.

## Cargo House

When English teacher Jerry Baldwin, history teacher Zev Siegl, and writer Gordon Bowker prepared to open their first coffee shop in Seattle in 1971, they had another nautical name in mind: Cargo House, which Bowker [said](http://old.seattletimes.com/html/businesstechnology/2004269831_bowker09.html) in an interview would have been a "terrible, terrible mistake."

"Somebody somehow came up with an old mining map of the Cascades and Mount Rainier, and there was an old mining town called Starbo," Bowker said. "As soon as I saw Starbo, I, of course, jumped to [Herman] Melville's first mate in Moby Dick." Thus, [Starbucks](https://bestlifeonline.com/starbucks-barista-pregnant-woman-coffee-viral-tweet/) was born.

## AuctionWeb

French-born Iranian-American computer programmer Pierre Omidyar [started AuctionWeb](https://www.ebayinc.com/stories/news/a-note-from-ebays-founder/) on September 3, 1995, with the idea of "bringing together buyers and sellers in an honest and open marketplace." Two years later, once traffic had grown beyond Omidyar's expectations, he tried to [change the name](https://codeinstitute.net/blog/auctionweb-ebay/) to echobay.com in honor of his consulting firm Echo Bay Technology Group. When he learned the domain was already taken by a gold-mining company called Echo Bay Mines, he shortened it to his second choice: eBay.

## Computing Tabulating Recording Corporation

The Computing Tabulating Recording Corporation began in 1911 and shortly after, Thomas J. Watson took over the company in 1914. He decided to use the name "[International Business Machines](https://www.ibm.com/ibm/history/history/year_1924.html)" in order to signal the company's foray into electric typewriters and other office machines—and in 1924, it became the "IBM" we know today.

## Nintendo Koppai

In 1889, Fusajiro Yamauchi started a [small company](https://www.historychannel.com.au/this-day-in-history/gaming-giant-nintendo-is-founded/) that sold handmade playing cards in Kyoto, Japan, and named it Nintendo Koppai, the former's assumed meaning is "leave luck to heaven" and the latter means "playing cards." The company cycled through a [series of names](https://www.nintendo.co.jp/corporate/en/history/index.html) before it officially became the Nintendo Playing Card Company in 1951—and in 1963, longtime president Hiroshi Yamauchi shortened the name to Nintendo, gearing up for the launch of the company's foray into video games.

## David's and Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web

In 1994, Stanford University electrical engineering graduate students Jerry Yang and David Filo created [a website](https://www.apnews.com/e3e04789cc80407e936b95298160b9ca) with the thoroughly wholesome name David's and Jerry's Guide to the World Wide Web. A year later, as the site became more popular, they changed its name to Yahoo, simply because they liked the way this word from the 1726 novel [*Gulliver's Travels*](https://mashable.com/2016/07/26/yahoo-history/) sounded. Later, they jokingly gave the word the "[backronym](https://books.google.com/books?id=xP-ZDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA35&dq=backronym+yahoo&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiImYPrtarkAhVth-AKHTY8BqIQ6AEwAHoECAAQAg" \l "v=onepage&q=backronym yahoo&f=false)" (an acronym that applies after the word is coined) of "Yet Another Hierarchical Officious Oracle."

## Confinity

Max Levchin, Peter Thiel, Luke Nosek, and Ken Howery founded security software company [Confinity](https://www.techworld.com/picture-gallery/business/history-of-paypal-1998-now-3630386/), a combination of the words "confidence" and "infinity," in December 1998. A year later, they launched [PayPal](https://www.wired.com/1999/07/paypal-puts-dough-in-your-palm/) as a means of allowing people to email payments, and, after merging with Elon Musk's X.com, PayPal proved to be the most [user-friendly moniker](http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/paypal-inc-history/). The company's name was officially changed in 2001.

## Precision Optical Instruments Laboratory

This Tokyo-based company was originally founded as [Precision Optical Instruments Laboratory](https://global.canon/en/corporate/history/01.html), or Seikikōgaku Kenkyūsho. In 1934, they began producing the Kwanon camera, a prototype for Japan's first-ever 35 mm [camera](https://bestlifeonline.com/kodak-digital-camera/) with a focal-plane-based shutter. Considering the success of the product—and in an attempt to make the name easier for Americans to say—the company changed its name to Canon Camera Co., Inc. in 1947. More than 20 years later in 1969, it became Canon Electronics Inc*.,*to highlight their growing repertoire.

## Sky Peer-to-Peer

When Niklas Zennström and Janus Friis, co-founders of music sharing site Kazaa, first released their [video chatting software](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4237338.stm) in 2003, it was under the name Sky Peer-to-Peer. Upon realizing they needed something catchier, though, they tried to shorten the moniker to [Skyper](https://www.neowin.net/news/microsoft-reveals-skype-was-almost-called-skyper/)—and when they discovered that domain name was already taken, they settled on Skype. Who needs the R anyway?

## Japan Optical Industries Co.

[Tokyo-based company](https://www.nikon.com/about/corporate/history/chronology/1917/index.htm) Nippon Kogaku K.K., which translates to Japan Optical Industries Co., Ltd., was founded in 1917. But it wasn't until 1988 that the company [was renamed](https://www.nikon.com/about/corporate/history/chronology/1980/index.htm) Nikon Corporation in honor of its best-selling cameras. The Nikon was named after "naikan," the Japanese spiritual practice of [extreme gratitude](https://bestlifeonline.com/gratitude/).

## Matchbox

When Hatch Labs launched its revolutionary [dating app](https://bestlifeonline.com/lumen-dating-app-over-50/) in 2012, it was called [Matchbox](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2056305116641976), a coy reference to igniting the flame of romance. However, since the name undoubtedly sounded too similar to Match.com, they decided to rebrand. Executives [settled on](https://www.rewindandcapture.com/why-is-tinder-called-tinder/) the word "tinder," the dry material that you use for starting a fire. "People will either get it, and they'll say, 'Oh—tinder: fire,' or they don't get it and they think it's some clever misspelling of the word 'tender,'" said co-founder Jonathan Badeen, according to the [*Milwaukee Business Journal*](https://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/print-edition/2014/03/28/all-in-a-name-why-is-it-called-tinder.html).

## Datsun

The Tokyo-based [automobile manufacturer](https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/nissan-motor-company-founded) has technically been known as Nissan since 1934. And yet, when the [brand expanded](https://www.upi.com/Archives/1981/07/18/Nissan-is-driving-out-Datsun-name/3070364276800/) to the United States in 1958, it did so under the name Datsun. However, the Nissan name eventually made its away across the ocean, and so the company [phased out](https://www.nytimes.com/1984/01/23/business/datsun-name-shift-is-costly-for-nissan.html) Datsun completely in 1984.

## Hertz Drive-Ur-Self System

When John Hertz bought Rent-a-Car Inc. from founder Walter L. Jacobs in 1923, he [renamed it](https://www.hertzfranchiseopportunities.com/legacy_of_leadership.html) Hertz Drive-Ur-Self System. Hertz sold the company to General Motors in 1926, but he eventually bought it back in 1953—and after doing so, he renamed the brand the Hertz Corporation.