

## Nominations for Names of the Year 2011

### *Trade Names:*

**Arab Spring:** {designation for pro-democracy movement in Middle East}

**Aubagio:** Aubagio<sup>®</sup>, Sanofi's newly marketed oral drug for multiple sclerosis. The name Aubagio<sup>®</sup> epitomizes the growing current and future trend among pharmaceutical brands for purely abstract naming – names that achieve their initial appeal through perceptual impact, visual, verbal or emotional. Aubagio<sup>®</sup> has a musical, melodic sound that is beautiful to the ear. It can evoke feelings that bring to mind a perfume brand, or luxury bath product brand. And once heard and seen, it is memorable. And even though Aubagio<sup>®</sup> is a global name, it can impact the culture in almost any local region, including the USA and Canada. Abstract names like Aubagio<sup>®</sup> are constructed from a toolbox of non-semantic but tangible design elements: a harmonious structure of letters and letter-strings, syllables and sequence, rhythm and stress, clarity and tonality that may spring from – but do not represent – any meaningful concepts. Although they are without meaning, abstract names that artistically crafted can affect us in many ways, with sensations of appeal that are independent of contextual reference. Abstract names also have great value in branding because they enter the arena as pristine perceptual packages with no distracting baggage. As unique, never-before seen pieces of language, they can echo their intended purposes and they can travel across linguistic boundaries, with the power to trigger universal appeal.

**Occupy Wall Street:** (3 nominations) {Political movement starting in New York City and spreading to many other places with the “Occupy” name}

**Siri:** The day before Apple co-founder Steve Jobs died, his successor, Tim Cook, announced the new iPhone 4S. Its most talked-about feature has been a voice-activated "digital assistant" called Siri. The name came from the company where Siri was originally developed: SRI International. "Siri" is simply "SRI" with an additional vowel. Uncharacteristically, Apple chose not to rename the product (although it had briefly considered calling it "The Assistant"). The slightly exotic and enigmatic name, coupled with the technology's robotic female voice, has led users to regard Siri as a woman: most reviews of the product refer to Siri as "she."

**200 Stories Tall:** It's a production/directing/editing company (in Chicago.) Once upon a time, a company founder named it after himself, as so many are wont to do. In the creative community he was selling to, that's suboptimal. (Check out the company names at the end of tv shows and movies: offbeat and quirky are expected.) How to convey long experience (the editor/director/producer founder has a few gray hairs) and high skills? That became the issue. We restated the question as what unique skills does the firm bring to the marketplace – and focused on visual storytelling, combined with a long history of vivid samples. A formidable (towering?) ability to make a visual story memorable separated him from younger startups. 200 Stories Tall combines the scale of the skill set and the long experience that built it. The owner took his new name out for a spin, and on the first day landed a job that will keep him fully occupied from January through March.

*Place Names:*

**Fukushima:** (3 nominations) site of the tsunami-crippled nuclear reactor; not only because of the disastrous earthquake and tsunami, but also as the site of the worst man-made environmental disaster since Chernobyl, The simultaneous occurrence of all three events and the enormous human toll it took had a world-wide impact.

**Tahrir Square:** {place in Cairo, Egypt, where demonstrations led to the overthrow of the Mubarak regime}

**Zuccotti Park:** {the “privately owned public space” in Lower Manhattan, named after John Zuccotti, former City Planning Commission chair and later chairman of Brookfield Properties, owner of the park. Famous as the original home of Occupy Wall Street.}

*Personal Names:*

**Casey Anthony:** {defendant in well-publicized murder trial, now acquitted}

**Harper Seven Beckham:** Name of the fourth child and first daughter of international celebrities David and Victoria Beckham, born July 10, 2011 in Los Angeles. The name is a great example of several aspects of modern baby naming. Harper is a “different but not too different” alternative for names like Heather and Taylor, originally inspired by writer Harper Lee. It was increasing among college-educated parents because of its sound and literary associations. Its boom was accelerated by the creation of the character Harper Finkle on the Disney Channel program “Wizards of Waverly Place”, premiering in October 2007. The Beckhams have said the program is a favorite of their two oldest sons, Brooklyn and Romeo. The middle name is from David Beckham’s “Number 7” athletic jerseys, but was probably also influenced by the mention of Seven as a possible baby name on “Seinfeld”. The name shows the back and forth of influences on naming within popular culture, and will probably cause Harper to increase as a female given name in the UK as well as the USA.

**Herman Cain:** {former Republican candidate for President of the USA}

**Moroccan Cannon:** son of Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon; {born April 30, 2011. His twin sister is named Monroe, after Marilyn Monroe.}

**Rebecca Black:** (singer of the horrible song, *Friday*)

**Steve Jobs:** (It didn’t hurt that lower-case “jobs” were on many Americans’ minds this year.) {Founder of Apple computers who died October 5, 2011}

**Tebow:** the eponymous verb/word "Tebow" { The online Global Language Monitor, which professes to track what's hot in the world of words, announced Dec. 12 that it has declared "tebowing, the act of 'taking a knee' in prayerful reflection" during an athletic activity is now "an English language word." If you're not familiar with Tim Tebow, he's the young, unorthodox QB who doesn't complete that many passes but runs well and certainly seems to be able to inspire his team. Since he was made the Broncos' starter, the team has won seven games and lost just once.... Tebow's also known for being very upfront about his strong Christian beliefs and for his exuberant, can-do personality}

*Fictional Names:*

**Katniss Everdeen:** from *The Hunger Games* book series; *The Hunger Games* are going to be even more popular this year since the movie comes out in March. The author did a great job in choosing character names, Babynames.com even has a page on it. {The young female heroine of this dystopian novel series has a first name from one of the common names of the aquatic edible plant *Sagittaria*}

**Tyrion Lannister:** from *A Song of Ice and Fire*, the fantasy book series by George R. R. Martin, who has been called “The American Tolkien” by critics. Tyrion, dwarf son of a noble house in a violent medieval fantasy world, was this year featured in both HBO’s series *A Game of Thrones* based on the first novel in the series and was a major character in *A Dance With Dragons*, the bestselling fifth novel in the series which was released in July. Martin’s characters usually have names which are alterations of English or “American” names, so they seem both familiar and fantastic at the same time. Much of Martin’s plot is inspired by the Wars of the Roses in medieval England, with Lannister obviously being an alteration of Lancaster. The ASOIAF family corresponding to the Lancaster’s rivals, the Yorks, is called Stark.