

White Paper

The abstract versus figurative
brand name type as seen through
hedge fund names and with reference
to the automotive industry

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Abstract

This paper studies the notion that the *abstract* and *figurative* name types appear to be equally useful to brand designers and strategists during brand creation and development, but in fact differ widely in the amount of help they provide. I define *abstract* as an adjective or abstract noun and *figurative* as a concrete noun used as metaphor. The function of the metaphor in brand creation is studied in detail. *Abstract* and *figurative* name types are widely represented in the hedge fund and automotive industries.

Introduction

This study is based on a table of around a hundred hedge fund names taken from a list of European Hedge Funds and divided up into a typology of six brand name types.

This typology has been partly dictated by the distinct nature of hedge fund name types and partly by the Appella Name Map style which analyses names by brand name type, tone and information content. So, whilst the types selected are indicative of the hedge fund sector and ideal for exemplification, they are not intended to be exhaustive. Also, the Code and Foreign Language types will include some names that are interchangeable with each other and with other types, as Code, here, means any name that has a hidden meaning. This will probably include some non-UK based hedge fund names, not known to us, whose meaning is not hidden in their own language.

Coded names:

The hedge fund sector contains a far higher proportion of the *Code* name type than most other sectors, which would seem to be consistent with the discreet and guarded nature of the hedge business. This includes names such as 3C, ARSAGO, ANTIRO and AKO. The extra layer of meaning outside that conveyed to the initiated by the customarily obscure sequences of letters or numbers can, more specifically, be related to either ingenuity for its own sake as a reflection of the skill behind the business, the authority and elitism of an inaccessible, coded language or simply the harmony of the phonetics. This category, typically, includes: numbers, symbols such as X, acronyms, Latin and Greek words that carry technical, medical and culture-progenitor meanings, such as KALLISTA, MANDATUM, made-up names and names using Latin or Greek roots, or bases. The Latin/Greek name, especially, is contextually significant here, laced as it is with cultural primacy and also linguistic heritage but, moreover, carrying associations of technical skill and learning that can form a strong matrix of meaning behind a hedge identity. The Latin/Greek based name has been written off as a brand name type more often than wisdom dictates. Certainly, and despite easy aversion to the message of obscurity and secrecy they inspire, classical language names, for all the reasons given above, tend to be more easily brandable names than, for example, Germanic or even Old English names with their raw, unwieldy constructions and folk-based meanings.

Foreign Language names:

The *Foreign language* type is any word that is identifiably from a non-UK language. This will necessarily include type interchangeable names such as, for example, the ALISEO fund which is named after an Italian word for 'trade wind' *aliseo* which, in an Italian study of the same kind, would be put under the Figurative column.

Context Symbolic names:

The *Context Symbolic* type includes those names, like SPOON and SALT & PEPPER for restaurant services, in which an item or function from the specific product/service field is used as a symbol for the whole entity.

Identity Rich names:

Identity-rich is an umbrella title for two types - *eponym* the business founder/owner name and *toponym* business location names - both of which are defined by the personal or locational identity of the business. These are rich in meanings of personalized and domiciliary identity. This includes some major players in the hedge fund world whose success has propelled them to the forefront of their field in a way that has allowed them to, effectively, endorse their own brands.

Table 1 European Hedge Fund Names A-C by Name Type

Code (Latin/Greek, acronym, contraction etc.)	Context Symbolic	Identity-rich (Eponym, Toponym)	Foreign Language	Figurative	Abstract
3C	ABC Square	Alder	Abante (Philippines, probably Tagalog)	AdAstra	Absolute
ABN AMRO	Sigma Square	Alfred Berg	Abrir (Es)	Adelphi	Altima
Abraxus		Appleton	Aktie Ansva (NL)	Aliseo	
ACP Partners		Arner	Altos Rahastoyhtio oy (Fi)	AlpStar	Altos
AKO		Ashmore	Arcus (De) Zensen	Appaloosa	Amplitude
Alinpa		AXA Rosenberg	Arcus Zenkei (De, Jpn)	Argent	Aspect
Antelma		Baader	Avenir (Fr)	Argo	Autonomy
Antiro		Baker Steel	Furinkazan	Ark	Axis
Armajaro		Balfour	Graal (NL)	Artemis	Benchmark
Arsago		Beaghton		Aster-X	Constans
Avendis		Bennelong		Atacama	Genus
Barep		Berkley Square		Atticus	Prelude
BBVA		BGB Weston		Auriel	Victory
BC		Blue Bay		Avenue	
BDT		Boston & Alexander		Axent	
BGI		Boussard & Gavaudan		Azimet	
BNP Paribas		Boyer Allan		Beagle	
Kallista		Bradshaw		Bellrock	
Mandatum		Braven		Blue Crest	
SOG Asia		Brevan Howard		Blue Danube	
Talentum		Bruce Nelson		Blue Trend	
		Brummer & Partners		Britannic	
		Butterfield Partners		Broadstone	
		Coolum		Caddis	
		Sandbourne		Figaro	
		Sark Fund		Herald	
				Sesame Calibre	
				Stella Nova	
				Starcross	
				Talisman	

Abstract names:

Abstract names, referring to names that are *adjectives* or *abstract nouns*, such as ASPECT (studied below), VICTORY, VANTAGE (auto), ELITE (auto) and AMPLITUDE, typically have more than one meaning and can apply to different sectors and fields. I am using 'field' here to mean a part of a sector.

A typical meaning structure in an *abstract* name:

ASPECT

PRIMARY (dictionary) MEANINGS

1. particular part or feature; a particular appearance or quality
2. the positioning of a building in a particular direction

SECONDARY (dictionary) MEANINGS

3. look, appearance
4. [Grammar] a category or form of a verb which expresses a feature of the action related to time, such as completion or duration.
5. [Astrology] any of a number of particular angular relationships between one celestial body and another.

(Soanes and Stevenson 2004)

These meanings, as seen through ASPECT, are distilled from a composite of fundamental meanings and sub-meanings such as size, movement, dimension, colour, time, consistency etc., some of which intersect. These in turn are centered around **prototype** meanings that define the dictionary definitions. Below, the prototype meaning is followed by the fundamental meanings that comprise it:

fraction/partition (element, part, or degree of meaning)

orientation (absolute direction, direction relative to the sun)

vision (perspective, quality of outlook, the human face, brightness, distance of outlook)

buildings (concrete structures, side, face, angular relation to surrounding elements)

Fundamental meaning bundles are key in brand name creation, brand meaning, and development. So that, for example, the 'degrees of meaning' item in the **fraction/partition** bundle will be salient in the minds of clients of ASPECT CAPITAL and ripe for development.

Below is a table of different ASPECT brand names with *aspect* meaning bundles listed by relevance to each brand.

Table 2 ASPECT brand names listed by relevance of prototype meaning

NAME	primary meaning	secondary meaning	tertiary meaning	quaternary meaning
ASPECT CAPITAL www.aspectcapital.com	partition	orientation	vision	buildings
ASPECT (FONT) http://www.typography.net/ type/aspect.htm	vision	partition	orientation	
ASPECT SYSTEMS (PROPERTY MANAGER) www.aspect.co.nz	buildings	vision	orientation	partition

Figurative names:

A figurative name, in this document, is a *noun* with a range of metaphorical meanings and associations developed from a well-defined and distinct primary meaning and visual image. I will be dealing here specifically with concrete nouns, names like WINDOWS, OYSTER and hedge funds APPALOOSA (also a breed of horse), BLUE DANUBE, BEAGLE and ARTEMIS (the virgin huntress of Greek mythology). These names, in addition to their primary meanings, that is to say metaphor-less meanings, have a large set of related metaphorical or associative meanings stemming from the diversity of their fundamental meanings. Hedge funds, and the automotive industry, with names like JAGUAR, PANTHER, PICASSO, PANDA, JAZZ and CHIMERA, are rich in figurative names.

The distinct, primary (dictionary) meaning is the shop display that attracts the clients. The figurative meanings and associations, are those most relevant to brand development. Figurative meanings are created by mapping fundamental meanings from the context of the primary meaning onto another domain or context. And, because the domain of the primary meanings in these figurative names is so semantically rich, 'visual access and outlook in buildings' for WINDOWS, 'marine bivalves with a rough, irregularly oval shell, some of which contain pearls' for OYSTER and 'famous large, European river' for BLUE DANUBE, the metaphorical target options are exponentially varied.

So, for WINDOW whose primary meaning is, 'an opening in a wall or roof, fitted with glass to admit light or allow people to see out' we have fundamental meanings of:

light source
access (visual forward movement)
rectilinear relief (inset) in a structure
transparency

(These would form prototype meanings of: 'light', 'viewpoint', 'access', 'transparency' and 'building fitting'.)

Over time, we have then created the metaphorical meanings: 'opportunity' and 'space, gap (in time)'. Microsoft then used the first and second fundamental meanings, 'light source' and 'access', above, to use as a metaphor for their WINDOWS program and the third as a WINDOWS logo. A specific physics meaning of 'wavelength invisibility' derives from the 'transparency' fundamental meaning.

Blue Danube '1D linearity'	Oyster '1D/2D, concentric ovals'
mapping onto >>>>>>>> N/A	mapping onto >>>>>>>> OYSTER CARD (design)
Blue Danube 'progression, growth,'	Oyster 'marine colour – blue'
mapping onto '(capital) growth'	OYSTER CARD main design colour
ASSOCIATIONS (METONYMS) and IDIOMS	
BLUE DANUBE	OYSTER CARD
Blue Danube 'Central Europe'	Oyster 'the world is your oyster'
mapping onto >>>>>>>> 'multi-cultural'	mapping onto >>>>>>>> 'easy travel > easy access' OYSTER CARD (main brand meaning)
Blue Danube 'crossing boundaries'	Oyster 'aphrodisiac'
mapping onto >>>>>>>> 'innovative'	mapping onto >>>>>>>> N/A or not used

Therefore, like WINDOWS, BLUE DANUBE and OYSTER, hedge funds BEAGLE, APPALOOSA, ARK, ARTEMIS etc. and car names JAZZ, PICASSO, PANTHER and CLIO etc. will have a wider range of meanings overall than the *Abstract* types. This will result in: a) extra, and more accessible, design, copy and advertising uses and b) hooks for the consumer. The *Abstract* names have fewer or no geometrical and dimensional meanings. It should not be forgotten that, once the brand is launched, it will also acquire its own active brand meaning dictated by the quality and nature of the product and this will be compared, subconsciously and consciously, with the existing meanings. If the brand is experiencing problems with some of its product line, then an appropriate figurative name, so rich in meaning can be more advantageous than one less well-endowed. Clearly, with the specific hedge fund sector used, the covert nature of operating procedures ensures that, in many cases, these benefits are still to be developed.

Reinforcement of brand

Consumer reflection and contemplation of a name may not be an everyday occurrence. However, the subconscious comparison of meanings - both brand and semantic - is continuous and is enriched by interchanging contexts. Compare the primary meanings of *Abstract* names such as ASPECT (above) which is not so enriched not being substantially structural and without dimension, time, pattern and consistency coordinates.

Compare the interchange of the 'visual progress' of looking through a window and of the window-derived 'light source' with the WINDOWS program meaning inspired by the 'rectilinear' meaning of the logo; of the idiomatic 'travel' meaning with that of the OYSTER Card's opportunity to travel around London; of the BLUE DANUBE's 'increasing flow' and 'size' with 'capital increase' and

'player importance', of the BEAGLE's ability to follow 'scent' and ARTEMIS's ability to hunt, with the tracking of 'trends' and 'arbitrage options'. When these meanings are more diverse, and provided enough are consistent with the brand meaning, then the brand image is re-enforced. Even for the arcane, discreet hedge fund whose existence is not internet-supported, benefits can be gained from a client's subconscious appreciation of brand strength.

The fundamental meanings and bundled components of meaning lodged in each metaphor strengthen each other: blue, as the colour of the sea, for example, is used in the circular 'shell-like' logo of OYSTER *and* in the use of the outline of the Thames on the OYSTER card (the Thames estuary is, we remember, the location of oyster beds *and* one of the features the card allows you to cross); the skill of the mythical hunter, ARTEMIS, *and* the technical authority of the Greek derivation (as a medallion logo) are both used on the ARTEMIS home page in the design of a modern-day hunter tracking profits, ear to the ground and the BLUE DANUBE's 'fluvial progression' can be compared with that of the 'musical progression' of the waltz.

Table 5 Summary of meaning types and meaning development in Abstract and Figurative names

Name type	Fundamental meanings	Prototype meanings	Associations (metonyms)	Trajectory	Metaphorical meanings
Abstract	some	some, non-concrete	few	non-interchangeable use of fundamental meanings.	none
Figurative	many	many, concrete and non-concrete	many	multi-dimensional mapping using multiple fundamental meanings	many

Brand hierarchy and strategy

In terms of the brand strategy; sub-brands, descriptors and copy will tend to relate more to the main metaphorical and idiomatic meanings as these correlate most directly with the proposition and brand criteria. Word meaning becomes brand strategy becomes brand meaning.

As we have already mentioned, designers may tend to work more with the fundamental meanings: geometrical and colour options, with line, (the 1D line of the oyster shell), relief (the relief perspective of the 'window' in the WINDOWS logo), periodicity and movement.

Conclusion

- 1) The *abstract* language type has multi-faceted meanings but is limited in the depth of meaning it can give to a brand.
- 2) *Figurative* name types are rich in both meaning range and depth.
 - They enable the physical coordinates of the primary meaning to be mapped on to a new image, or domain, constructing a powerful brand-relevant metaphor.
 - The metaphor creates a brand identity which embeds itself into the subconscious.
- 3) Different levels of the *figurative* name types work at different levels of the brand hierarchy.
- 4) The linguist or language creative people can inform design concept.

One of the unique benefits of the Appella search engine - Argo - is that of being able to search by any of the above-mentioned meaning types: by Greek or Latin root or myth, by qualities such as access, light source, value, containment and emotion as well as by fundamental meanings such as dimension, pattern, continuity, colour and hardness.

Specifically, we tag all concrete nouns with the full range of their prototype and fundamental meanings. This unique search and craft system has recently produced names as varied as: Oyster (TFL), Optivita (Kelloggs), CopyBook (AOL), Engage (RugbySuperleague), Frutasia (Masterfoods) and Bailey's Glide (Diageo).

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