

The businesses that got it wrong

Arch Deluxe was a very expensive flop for McDonald's in the mid-1990s. It was a premium burger aimed at a sophisticated adult audience and the name was chosen to suggest 'luxury'. The trouble is that no-one associates McDonald's with luxury and sophistication; McDonald's values are convenience and consistency. It is estimated that McDonald's spent over \$300 million dollars on the **Arche Deluxe** brand, but it all came to naught – the product was soon withdrawn from sale.

Consignia was the short-lived name of the British postal service, the Royal Mail, between 2001 and 2002. The name was meant to demonstrate the global nature of the business (*Royal* was regarded as too British) and to show that the company was involved in more activities than just sending letters. The name **Consignia** was designed to make you think of the word *consign*, whilst also evoking the regal connotations of *insignia*. One problem was that people weren't sure how to pronounce it. Another was that it reminded some people of a 1980s deodorant called Insignia, whose irritating ad spoofed a Rolling Stones song. Even worse, the word *consign* has overwhelmingly negative connotations – it usually appears in phrases such as consign to the dustbin, consign to the scrap heap or consign to oblivion.

Emu Airways was a small Australian airline based in Adelaide. It closed down in 2005. An emu is a good Aussie emblem but could the airline's demise have anything to do with the fact that emus can't fly?

Froogle became plain old Google Product Search in 2007, four years after it was launched. **Froogle** is a snappy and witty name, and was meant to be a cross between *frugal* and *Google*. Unfortunately, most people didn't get the joke and never clicked on the link, because they didn't know what it was meant to be.

Monday was the short-lived name of Price Waterhouse Cooper's consulting arm when it was spun off as an independent entity in the wake of the Enron scandal. The name was intended to denote 'a fresh start'. Unfortunately, **Monday** may suggest a beginning in the West, but it's not the beginning of the week elsewhere – in the Arab world, for instance. **Monday** reminded many people of Black Monday, the 1987 stock market crash, or the Monday Club, a right-wing group in the British Conservative Party. Pop fans were reminded of the hit songs *I don't like Mondays* and *Manic Monday*, and some couldn't help humming the Mamas and Papas song *Monday, Monday* that goes 'Whenever Monday comes you can find me cryin' all of the time'.

Oscos is a chain of pharmacy stores based in the US Midwest. In the mid-1980s the parent company acquired another chain, Sav-On, based in southern California, and renamed all those stores **Oscos**. Sales in California dropped and three years later branches in that state reverted to their original name, Sav-On. The company bosses denied that there was anything wrong with the name **Oscos**, claiming that Sav-On was more familiar to the local population, but many commentators thought that the Spanish-speaking residents of southern California were put off by the name. **Oscos** was too similar to the Spanish word *asco*, which means 'revolting' or 'disgusting'.

Zyklon was the name of a running shoe launched by Umbro in 2002. **Zyklon** is German for *cyclone*, but it was too reminiscent of Zyklon B, a lethal insecticide used in Nazi concentration camps, for non-German-speaking markets. Umbro apologised for any offence caused, but this did not satisfy some Jewish groups, who accused Umbro of choosing the name deliberately to appeal to the thuggish, racist element within sports fandom.

There are more examples of businesses that got it wrong in the e-guide **Choosing a winning name for your business**.