

What's The Deal? Why Do Accounting Firms Use Initials Instead of Names?

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With very rare exception, names work better than initials.

You'd think it'd be pretty obvious. But accounting firms curiously LOVE their initials.

The problem is, initials don't mean anything.

They're gibberish.

Which one is easiest to remember if you wanted to Google them tomorrow? Here, try this:

Which of the “names” below grabs your attention?

SKCP&H

EDY&V

FHP

Smith & Jones

LK&R

It's pretty obvious, right?

So why do so many smaller accounting firms choose to use their initials instead of their actual names?

Part of the problem is that the biggest accounting firms use their initials. Think KPMG, PwC, E&Y, BDO, BKD, RSM, UHY, CBIZ. The thinking might be - “They're big and successful. They must know what they're doing, so let's do that too.”



The only difference between you and them is, you know, the 150,000 additional professionals working to spread the brand worldwide. Oh, and the *hundreds* of millions of dollars they spend every year in advertising and PGA sponsorships.

When you're really prominent, you can call yourself whatever the heck you want with total impunity. Just look at [The artist formerly known as] Prince.

If you're reading this blog post, chances are you're neither KPMG nor Prince.

So, unless you have a truly awful, impossible-to-spell or -pronounce firm name, *use your firm's street name*. That is, your first name or two – whatever your community most-typically calls you. Generating business is really hard, so why make your life even *more* difficult?

More importantly, it's what Ries and Trout call "The No-Name Trap" in one of my favorite marketing books, "Positioning: The Battle for The Mind."

Chapter 10. The No-Name Trap

Companies with long, complex names have tried to shorten them by using initials. This strategy seldom works.85

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