

Uber is the Uber of Uber

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In the process of researching naming strategies for an online course I am writing, I came across the latest rebrand done by Wolff Olins for Uber. Check it out, it is the most thorough work I have seen, and the client knows it as they have a mind-blowing case study which you can see [here](#).



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The Uber name

The name Uber is taken from the German “über” meaning above or across. Short, pithy and very memorable, the Uber name has taken on another meaning - to get a taxi. But unlike the brand names Hoover, Jacuzzi, Band-Aid and Frizbee which have become generic names for those products, Uber is very much brand specific and not likely to become a catch-all for taxi-hailing apps.

However, it has created a new noun. To be the Uber of... (hotels, finance, and so on) means it is a company that does not own its own products or services but is merely a conduit for transactions, like Uber. Well done Uber, free advertising and name recognition at its best, without the side effects of generification (which is actually a real word, look it up).

The Uber name also has some other rather specific advantages in its current category. If one looks at the name Lyft and Taxify which are direct competitors to Uber, they are very specific to their offering, which is as a taxi service. Uber has no such constraints. Recently Uber has launched Uber Eats, which as a brand extension works perfectly well. At a push, Taxify and Lyft could credibly offer a similar service, but that is where it ends.



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Uber Anything

I was joking with a colleague that Uber's brand name is so malleable that you could pretty much Uber Anything. And lo and

behold there is an Uber Scooter coming out soon. The beauty of the versatility of the Uber name is that they can move into a huge variety of fields credibly as they really can be the Uber of anything. You can imagine getting Uber Analytics, Uber Hotel, Uber Medical, Uber Tutors the list goes on.

This third and latest rebrand of Uber has removed all references to taxis and transport. It is a completely generic corporate identity and I think this has been done very strategically. With its main business being put under pressure by lawmakers and well-funded competitors in the UK, America and China, Uber seems to be aggressively looking at new and innovative business opportunities in unrelated categories as opposed to trying to eke out growth in a now mature taxi-hailing app market.

By consciously making itself more generic, Uber is setting itself up for its next logical progression, which is to become the Uber of everything.

ABOUT NICHOLAS KUHNE

Nicholas is the founder of brand consultancy Wunderbrand.

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