HOSPITAL BRANDING

Naming a hospital: the decision that outlives everyone

Doctors move, equipment changes, interiors get redone. The name stays on the gate for decades. Treat it as a project.

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THE PROBLEM

How hospital names usually get chosen

- Settled in one meeting, when the signage vendor needs artwork
- A senior person likes it, the shortlist collapses
- Nobody can spell it over the phone
- Search results dominated by an unrelated clinic
- Makes no sense when the next unit opens across town

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ARCHITECTURE FIRST

Three shapes a unit name can take

GROUP+PLACE	Simple, transfers trust instantly, units become interchangeable
GROUP+ROLE	A distinct descriptor for a unit with a different job
OWN NAME	Light group endorsement; needs its own marketing budget for years

Decide the shape first. It rules out most candidates before anyone falls in love with one.

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THE TESTS

Six tests every serious candidate must pass

1. Phone test: one plausible spelling after hearing it once
2. Regional language test: no awkward meanings, pronounceable
3. Auto driver test: decide the short form, or the city will
4. Search test: type it into search and maps from the catchment
5. Signage and ten-year test: readable from the road, still true later

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NAME SOURCES

Where Indian hospital names come from

PLACE	Memorable, helps local search, struggles when the group expands
FOUNDER	Warmth and legacy, tied to one family, often fails phone test
SANSKRIT	Sounds serious, already used by many providers, hard to tell apart
INVENTED	Easiest to protect, hardest to fill with meaning

In healthcare, clarity beats cleverness. Anxious patients need what and where.

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COLLISIONS

A name becomes a search query on day one

- Similar clinic or lab name: patients call the wrong number
- Reviews land on the wrong listing
- A few patients turn up at the wrong address
- AI assistants associate a shared name more weakly with you

  Check search, maps, social handles and domains before shortlisting

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BORING CHECKS

Build protection into the timeline, not the end

- Trademark and company name check with counsel, before it leaks
- Brief counsel with short forms and block names too
- Register domains and handles for finalists quietly
- Check insurer, TPA, licence and scheme registrations that carry the name

Changing a name on these after opening is slow. Before opening, it is just paperwork.

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INSIDE THE BUILDING

Blocks, wings and centres need discipline too

- Keep internal names functional: patients need the right lift
- Donor or river names confuse directions in appointment messages
- Keep specialty centres under the hospital brand unless marketed across units
- Write the naming system down; one person approves new names

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TEST IN USE

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The strongest signal is whether people can say, spell and find the name without help. Liking it matters much less.

Have contact centre agents answer calls with each finalist and see which one callers repeat correctly.

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READ THE FULL GUIDE

Naming a new hospital or unit, in full

- The six practical tests, step by step
- Legal, domain and search checks to run early
- How to run naming as a short project
- gauravphogat.com/naming-a-new-hospital-or-unit

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