



Special Report

Naming Your Business

pathways

Your Step By Step Guide To A Successful Web Business

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Naming your Business

We've discussed the importance of marketing your business on the Internet, and we've defined the four main business structures you can choose from.

Now let's move on to one of the most fun and important steps in getting your business started: choosing a business name.

Naming a business is a lot like naming a baby. You want a name that gives people a favourable impression, isn't very long and hard to spell, and which paints an accurate picture of what your business is all about.

In other words, your business name is often the first impression clients have of your company. You want to make it a good one.

What's In a Name?

Did you know that your business name can have a huge impact on the success of your Internet business?

It's true. For example, if you choose a name that's hard to spell, clients might have a hard time finding your web site through manual searches.

They might also find it difficult to share your business name with other potential clients. You don't want to lose sales just because your company's name isn't user-friendly.

Besides being easy to spell and remember, your business name should be appropriate to the image you want to project.

If you're in the construction business, it would be a good idea to choose a business name that contains words synonymous with strength and longevity.

Think of it from the customer's perspective: would you rather trust

your home construction to a business named 'Iron Oak', or to one called 'Willow Bend'?

The first gives an impression of solid work that will withstand time and the elements.

The second sounds a bit flimsy.

Your business name can draw in customers – or turn them away – within seconds.

When choosing a business name, you should also consider your target market. If you're aiming your products at young people, funny or irreverent names might be acceptable.

If you're targeting a more traditional sector, you won't gain much trust by naming your consulting firm 'Fluffy Bunny Financial'.

Again, try to think of the qualities that people look for in a business, and name yours accordingly.

Picture Your Business Name

It's been proven that customers are drawn to businesses with strongly visual names.

To use examples from above, the name 'Iron Oak Construction' probably puts you in mind of a strong old tree, while 'Fluffy Bunny Financial' probably paints a rather silly image in your mind.

People like to have a mental image to associate with a name. If you go with an overly generic name, you risk becoming just another website in the crowd.

Experts recommend names that include visual elements like colours. A colour name can also be tied to your company's logo.

Again, it's important to choose words that give the impression you're going for. If your business is fast-paced and energetic, warm colours like reds and yellows would be appropriate.

Blue is considered a trustworthy colour, while green is often used to denote health and the environment.

More Tips for Choosing a Name

We've gone over some basic guidelines for choosing a good business name. Now let's get into more detail. It's fun to think up names that represent your business, but there are some practical considerations as well.

Remember, once you register your business name, you'll have to live with it day after day. It's important to get it right.

What Does Your Business Do?

If you provide a straightforward service such as cleaning, painting, or moving, you should try to incorporate that service somewhere in your business name.

If a customer were to see the name 'Inkblot', they wouldn't know if you were a typesetter or a tattoo artist. But if they saw the name 'Inkblot Tattoos', they would quickly know whether or not you provide a service they need.

Abstract names can be entertaining, but they're also risky for young businesses with little name recognition.

Should You Use Your Own Name?

This is largely up to personal preference. However, you should try

to imagine what it would be like if your company became well known.

Would you enjoy seeing your own name in newspapers and magazines? Are you comfortable having your name and

your business forever linked in people's minds?

Do you enjoy attention, or are you a rather private person?

Is your name easy to spell and remember?

Is the name too common to make your business a stand-out?

All of these are questions you should ask yourself before using your own name for your business.

What's Your Angle?

Your business name should reflect your company's culture. Is it young and edgy, or traditional?

The name you choose will determine how clients perceive your business.

Those who want a fresh, innovative company might be put off by a name that sounds too old-fashioned. A more traditional market might not take irreverent names seriously.

Decide which angle your business will take, and choose your business name accordingly.

Are Trendy Words Ever a Good Idea?

When you select your business name, try to think long-term. Slang phrases that are popular today might not be in fashion next year – or even next week.

The Internet spreads catch-phrases at the speed of light, but trendy speech can go out of style as quickly as it came in.

Go with a business name that will withstand the test of time.

Does the Name Translate Well?

It's not usually the first consideration that comes to mind when choosing a business name, but it has become an important concern in our global village.

If you plan to do business overseas, make sure your company's name doesn't mean something offensive in the relevant languages.

Such slips can cause everything from mild embarrassment to decreased sales figures in the markets in question.

Also, make sure the business name is easy for your foreign consumers to read and pronounce.

What Do Customers Want?

Put yourself in your clients' shoes. You're searching for a business that meets your needs. You come across an online directory.

With hundreds of businesses competing for your patronage, which would you choose? Would you click on a business name that was easy to read and pronounce, or one that was a long string of consonants all run together?

Would you be more likely to choose a business at the beginning of an alphabetical listing, or would you scroll all the way through to the Z's? Experts recommend choosing a name that's close to the beginning of the alphabet for optimal placement in directory listings.

Is Your Business Local?

Not every Internet business is a global one. Maybe you already have a storefront shop that does a lot of local business. If this is the case, you could a business name that includes the name of your town or city. Some locations have nicknames which could be used to give your business a bit of local flavor. Famous local landmarks could also be incorporated.

Consider Future Growth

Many small business owners choose a creative trading name, but keep their corporate name purposefully bland. They don't use their business name as their brand name because they might want to develop other brands some day.

Now you've learned the basic rules for choosing a business name. Are you inspired? Do you have lots of ideas? You're almost ready to pick a name, but first we must learn about the rules for naming your business, according to its business structure.

Domain Names

Your company's Internet address, also called a URL or domain name, is an important part of the branding process. It's important to choose a suitable domain name because your customers will come to associate the domain name with the business itself.

Think of Internet giants like Amazon and Facebook. Their web sites are easy to find because the domain names are also the business names. It's a good strategy that helps customers remember your web address.

It's also important to remember that your domain name will be included in your business email address. For example, if you

opened an Internet boutique called 'Laurel's Florals', you could register the domain 'www.laurelsflorals.com'. Your contact email address would be info@laurelsflorals.com (or whatever you chose to put before the @).

Like your business name, your domain name should be easy to spell, easy to remember, and should contain some description of your goods or services.

Many web site owners also register their domain name with the *.net* and *.org* suffixes so that anyone looking for their site will find it, no matter which suffix the searcher types in.

The best way to choose a domain name is to brainstorm. Try using a large pad and write down all ideas that come to you. Enlist the help of others in this step because you may be surprised by some of the excellent choices that you may hear.

Try to allow enough time to choose your domain name so that you are certain you are comfortable with it.

Naming your online business is somewhat like naming your child. You'll be using the name over and over again for a long time so make sure it's one you like.

Once you have a large array of name choices try to narrow your picks down. To do this use a list system. On a sheet of paper make three columns – one for "Good", another for "Better" and another for "Best".

Once you have the names separated into columns you can more easily sort through your choices.

Take these final options online to see if they are available.

Keep in mind that there are several choices for domain names online. It is helpful to understand the differences. A *.com* domain is a company.

This is by far the most common type of domain and the one that most people automatically use when they enter web site addresses online.

There are many other domain extensions that are available for use. These include *.net*, *.org*, *.edu.*, *.info.*, *.co.uk*, *.tv*, *.biz*, *.name* and *.us* to name just a handful of choices.

If your domain name of choice is not available you can choose a different extension type or try other variations of your business name.

If you have a great business name that isn't yet taken you may want to consider reserving it in more than one extension. For example you can register your site as a *.com* and a *.net* if they are both available.

That will help keep your name unique later on.

Choose a domain name that describes your business
Pick a name that is not offensive to anyone or any group

Create a domain name that is simple to spell
Find a domain name that is easy to remember
Use only letters, numbers and the hyphen in a domain name

The name must be unique – not in use by anyone else
Choose a name that is less than 26 characters (including the extension)

Domain names are not case sensitive
You can register more than one domain name