

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHOOSING THE RIGHT BUSINESS NAME

Did you know that 'Ebay' was originally known as 'AuctionWeb,' 'Subway' went by the name 'Pete's Super Submarines,' and Facebook was initially 'Thefacebook'?

In the dynamic world of entrepreneurship, where every decision can have a profound impact on your business's trajectory, one of the first and most crucial choices you'll make is selecting a name for your company.

This seemingly simple decision is, in fact, laden with significance, as it can influence your brand identity, legal standing, and online presence.

The Business Name as Your Brand Identity

Your business name is your first opportunity to make a lasting impression on potential customers and investors. It's your initial foray into branding, and it sets the tone for your entire enterprise. A well-chosen name can evoke positive emotions, convey your company's values, and establish trust from the outset.

Ensuring Availability at Companies House

Before you fall in love with a business name, it's essential to check its availability at Companies House. Registering your company under a unique name is not just a formality; it's a legal requirement.

Companies House provide a '[Company name availability checker](#)' whereby the proposed name may be checked against the register. You must ensure that your name:

- ends with 'limited' (or Ltd), 'public limited company' (or plc) if you are a company
- if you have a limited liability partnership your name ends with 'limited liability partnership' (or LLP)
- isn't offensive
- isn't the same as one already on the index of company names
- doesn't include any sensitive words or expressions - unless you have obtained permission to use them

Legal and Trademark Considerations

Selecting a name or logo without considering its legal implications can lead to costly legal battles and rebranding efforts down the road. Before finalising your business name, conduct thorough research to ensure it's not already in use by another entity, and check for trademark availability to protect your brand. You can make a search on the [UK Intellectual Property Office](#) (IPO) website.

Domain Names and Your Online Presence

In today's digital age, your online presence is paramount. Once you've settled on a business name, it's crucial to secure a domain name that matches or closely aligns with it.

But what happens if you think of a name, but someone already owns the domain you want? It can be a costly business, as Elon Musk, the boss of electric carmaker Tesla found out. Musk revealed in a 2018 tweet that the firm had to pay \$11m to buy the website 'tesla.com' from a Californian man called Stuart Grossman. Prior to that point Tesla had to make do with 'teslamotors.com'.

Avoiding Pitfalls

When selecting a business name, be aware of potential pitfalls. Consider the following:

1. **Unintended Associations:** Make sure your chosen name doesn't carry negative connotations or associations in other languages or cultures.
2. **Longevity:** Choose a name that will stand the test of time. Avoid trendy or overly specific names that might limit your business's growth.
3. **Future Expansion:** Think about your long-term goals. Will your business name still make sense if you expand into new markets or offer additional products or services?
4. **Check Social Media Handles:** Before finalising your decision, ensure that social media handles associated with your chosen name are available, or consider variations if needed.

Conclusion

Selecting a business name is not just a creative exercise; it's a strategic decision with far-reaching implications for your brand, legal standing, and online presence. By considering availability at Companies House, pursuing trademark protection, and securing a relevant domain name, you're laying the foundation for a successful business.

Take your time, choose wisely, and remember that your business name is often the first thing people will associate with your brand—it's an investment in your future success.

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