

THE BEST TIPS FOR

Naming Your Business

Taking some of the
mystery out of finding
that perfect name



RHONDA LOWE CONSULTING

Getting Started

The name you choose for your business is a representation of who you and your business are.

It provides that all important first impression of who you are and helps people decide if you are what they need.

It also reflects your brand and how you want people to feel about your business.

It's important that it is clear in what you do and easy to remember. Your name should not leave them wondering if they need your products or services, and it definitely should not leave them wondering what it is that you do.

Is it Available?

Why is it even important?

- You don't want to choose a name that is currently trademarked. That can become a legal issue.
- You don't want to be confused with someone else that has the same name, or someone that has a less than stellar reputation.
- Your goal is to stand out from the crowd.

In the end, if you choose a name that is being used by someone in a different state or country, just remember to make sure your marketing sets you apart from everyone else.

How to check for availability

There are 3 simple ways to see if the name you like is available.

- The easiest of all is a **Google search**. Simply type the name into the search bar and see what comes up. Scroll down past all the paid searches and see what businesses come up with that name.
- Also important, is to do a **domain search** because you don't want to pick a name for your business that is not available for your website domain.
- Here is how you can do a **trademark search** to see if the name you are interested in is already taken:

The United States

Trademark and Patent Office

www.uspto.gov/trademarks/search

Your Domain Name

What exactly is a domain name?

A domain is the online address for your website. Without a domain name people would have to remember your IP address, which is just a bunch of numbers. This makes it easier on your customer to find you and easier in your marketing.

Here are a couple
of the most popular ways
to check to see if the domain
name is available.

www.godaddy.com

www.bluehostdomain.com

Which extension should I get?

The extension is what comes after the “dot” and designates the Top Level Domain. The most commonly used is .com and is generally the first choice.

If the name you want is not available as a .com you might check and see if it is available as a .net or .info.

When you type your name into the search bar you will also see other variations to choose from. You can choose to purchase other variations if you want to protect your name from someone else choosing a domain name that is similar to yours.

How to purchase your domain

When you enter the name in the search bar, you will see a list of available names, as well as the price to purchase them. This is set up as most online purchases where there is a cart that you click on to purchase that domain name.

You might also see a message that the name is for sale by a broker. This means they will contact the owner of that domain and negotiate, on your behalf, to purchase that domain from them. You will pay a fee if they are successful.

Protecting Your Identity

When you purchase your domain name, your personal information is registered to your domain name and is published in the public WHOIS directory.

Most domain providers offer some sort of privacy package for an additional cost that protects your private information. Instead of your personal information, it will show the domain provider. This can also help to protect you from spam and identity theft.

When to renew

Most companies have you purchase your domain name for one year. This is often a lower, introductory price. The renewal price per year is generally higher.

Things to Think About

- Know your customer. You want your name to be something that they would think to search for. It should be something that speaks their language and resonates with them. If your target market is millennials, you will choose different words in your name than if your target market is the Boomer generation.
- Make sure that your name reflects your brand and conveys the image that you are wanting to project to your target market.

- Put yourself in your customers shoes. What words would they use to search a business like yours?
- Make a list of keywords associated with your type of business and/or industry for help. Using a keyword in your business name can help in SEO but avoid adding a bunch of keywords.
- What is your competition using? Is it clear who and what they do? As you review these, take the time to reflect on how they make you feel. What image do they bring up for you and how does that relate to what they actually do?

- Make sure that the name you choose does not limit the growth of your business. This might not be something you think of when you are first starting your business, so I hope this helps you to take that into account. Chances are your business will not look the same in 3 years or 5 years that it does when you are first starting out. Actually, with proper planning, it will not because you are going to work to grow your business. That growth could come from expansion in location or adding new revenue streams that are slightly (or a lot) different than when you first started.

You don't want a name like "Joe's Lemonade Stand" when you plan to end up a full-fledged restaurant or maybe wholesale your product. While you don't want to be too vague where people have no idea what you do, you also don't want to be so narrowly focused that it would not work for future growth.

- Keep it short. Long names are hard to say and hard to remember.
- It is also recommended that you avoid using numbers, special characters, hyphens and obscure words that are hard to pronounce and remember.

Your Name and Logo

Whether you choose to design your logo yourself or work with a graphic artist, it is good to work on the various components of your brand at the same time.

Does your name lend itself to a particular logo?

This is where having a clear image of your brand and your target market in mind will be helpful.

If your name projects a certain image, and that ties in with your target market, this will make it easy to design a logo around that.

Creating it on your own

If you are not completely sure on what you want your logo to look like, there are lots of resources to give you inspiration.

If you are looking for help with creating your brand and/or logo, here are some places to check out that offer both free and paid resources:

www.brandgenie.com

www.logogarden.com

www.fiverr.com

www.99designs.com

www.images.google.com

www.istockphoto.com

You can also check out a graphics program such as Canva that can help you create your brand. Here you will find templates and easy-to-follow instructions to create anything from a simple logo to a complete brand kit. They offer both a free and a paid version. www.canva.com

www.rhondaloweconsulting.com

Hiring a Graphic Artist

If the thought of designing your own logo seems overwhelming, or just not in your wheelhouse, consider having it done professionally. Several online options are listed above, but if you would rather work in person with a graphic artist, that can have some great benefits as well. It should make communication easier and probably quicker.

To make the best use of your time and theirs, spend the time going through this checklist to begin getting clear on what you want so that you can communicate that to the graphic artist.

Ask to see some examples of their work. See if they have a certain style or are versatile in their style?

Give them as much information as you can about the ways you will use this logo, the colors you will use, the way you want it to be perceived by your target market etc. If you have a brand board that shows brand colors, share that with them.

Find out how many concepts they will provide that is included in the price.

- What type of file, or files, will they be available in?
- Will the art be custom or stock?
- What is the turnaround?
- Will you own the design, or will they?

Where to Find Resources

Resources will obviously vary by location. Here are some ways to start the search in your local area:

- Your Chamber of Commerce.
- Your local high school art teacher for students that have shown skill in this area.
- Your local community college as well as any State or University in your area for recommendations from their art or business professors.
- Ask friends and family members for recommendations.
- Look at local business logos, and if you see something you like, ask them where they had it done.
- Run a Google search for graphic artists in your area.
- Post on social media looking for recommendations.

Things to Think About

- Think about how you will be using your logo and what shape would work best. Consider the requirements for your website, social media, business cards etc.
- Can your logo be adapted to a horizontal as well as a vertical format? Think about what feelings colors and words portray and what works best for you and your target market.
- Does your logo reproduce well in color as well as black and white?

Finally, while it is not advisable to change your name over and over, your logo can change until you get the perfect fit. Keep working on your brand- and all that entails until you feel like you got it right.