

GUIDELINES FOR NAMING A COMPANY

1. **Unique and unforgettable.** We are looking for a name that stands out from the crowd, a handle that will remain fresh and memorable over time.
2. **Avoid unusual spellings.** When creating a name, stay with words that can easily be spelled by customers/stakeholders.
3. **Easy to pronounce and remember.** Forget made-up words and nonsense phrases. Make your name one that customers can pronounce and remember easily. Acronyms should be avoided.
4. **Keep it simple.** The shorter in length, the better. Avoid using hyphens and other special characters. Since certain algorithms and directory listings work alphabetically, pick a name closer to A than Z. These days, it even helps if the name can easily be turned into a verb, like [Google](#) me.
5. **Make it international friendly.** Occasionally, business owners will choose names that are nonsense words. Quirky words (Yahoo, Google, Fogdog) or trademark-proof names concocted from scratch (Novartis, Aventis, Lycos) are a big risk. Always check the international implications. More than one company has been embarrassed by a new name that had negative and even obscene connotations in another language.
6. **Give a clue.** Try to adopt a business name that provides a little bit about what your business does. Your business name should match your business and remind customers of the services you provide.
7. **Make sure the name is available.** This may sound obvious, but a miss here will cost you dearly. Do an internet search to see if this is a name that has been taken.
8. **Favour common suffixes.** Everyone will assume that the company name is your domain name minus the suffix “.com” or the standard suffix for your country. If these suffixes are not available for the name you prefer, pick a new name rather than settling for an alternate suffix like “.net” or “.info.” Get all three suffixes if you can.
9. **Don't box yourself in.** Avoid picking names that don't allow the business to move around or add to its product line. This means avoiding geographic locations or product categories to your business name. With these specifics, customers will be confused if the business expands to different locations or additions are made to the product line.
10. **Sample potential customers.** Come up with a few different name choices and try them out on potential customers, investors, and co-workers. Skip your family and friends who know too much. Ask questions about the names to see if they give off the impression you desire.