

TIPS FOR CHOOSING THE RIGHT DOMAIN NAME

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Did you know that choosing the right Domain Name for your Online entity is more important than your business or organisations name!

The problem most people share when first going Online is they don't know, what they don't know! Sound confusing? It's not really, it's just that the Internet has evolved so quickly, people have been left behind when it comes to the basics on how this medium works.

So if there is just one point you can take on faith it is this;
**CHOOSING THE CORRECT DOMAIN NAME WILL MAKE
A HUGE DIFFERENCE TO YOUR ONLINE EXPERIENCE.**

In this article you will learn the fundamental principles needed to secure that winning name, and the best way to get started is to understand the benefits of having a Domain Name in the first place and why this is so very important.

A Domain Name becomes your own unique identifier Online, and will continue for as long as you keep it active. With over 25 million names registered at last count, having a unique identifier becomes critical.

Some search directories such as Yahoo only index websites that have there own Domain Name. So just by having a Domain Name it is more likely that visitors searching for Your product or service will find your website.

Even your email address that appears when you send mail helps promote YOUR Domain Name instead of someone else's site. (Ever heard of hotmail.com?)

A Domain Name is generally associated with your entity in one or more of four ways. The first step of the name selecting process is choosing which one of these four main associations is best for your particular purpose.

- 1. Your geographic location*
 - 2. Your industry and/or main activity*
 - 3. Your registered business/entity name*
 - 4. Your main product or service name*
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Is .com the best? What about other extensions?

The simply answer you read often is this; If most of your business is done locally in a single country then probably you should consider that country's extension, however if it is the global market you are after then without question a .com should be chosen.

Because we are creatures of habit many Internet users automatically type a .com extension when entering a web address. That is why I hold the opinion that you should aim for the .com version first of any name. Imagine competitors getting your visitors just because you had a different extension and they had the .com name.

Other extensions like .net, .info, .biz, .org can still be viable alternatives but generally they are not as widely recognised. However as mentioned, for an Australian business operating solely in an Australian market, then .au may well be a good choice.

Let's not forget the marketing advantage of registering more than one Domain name, all directing visitors to a main site. Budget permitting, this can be a very effective strategy.

Relate your name to your business

Search engines often rank sites using keywords, therefore it is more likely you can benefit from using at least 1 keyword related to your industry. Make it descriptive of your site, your product or service.

Better still is choosing a name that is your actual business or at least similar, that way any of your off-line advertising is also promoting your Online presence. Particularly if people could guess your Domain from your business name.

Size does matter!

Short domains are supposed to be best but it is increasingly difficult to find one. Just because it is a little longer doesn't make it bad. The key here really is the shorter the name the easier it is to remember and less likely to be spelt incorrectly.

Whenever possible your domain name should not be longer than 13-15 characters, numbers or hyphens. It is much more difficult for the average person to remember longer variations of a web address.

Make it easy to remember!

Be creative, make it stick in people's minds. Using general words are good to make this happen. Sometimes even combinations that rhyme or sound good together. Either way, an easy to remember name is a good one.

Do the telephone test! Try it in a phone conversation, does it get confused? Do you have to repeat yourself? or spell it out? This isn't always a top consideration but it is logical that your Domain Name must be easily communicated.

Avoid similarities at all cost, (unless you own them yourself) You really don't want people ending up on your competitors site instead of yours, just because they were confused between the names.

Hyphens, suffixes and prefixes

These fall into the same category as using them in email addresses, you need to avoid them as much as possible.

As always there are exceptions to this rule especially if it is a brand name or is the correct way to write a word. However they can be difficult to remember, and almost encourages mistakes.

Suffixes and prefixes like i's, e's, the's and numbers, again just makes it harder to promote your Domain name. If you do decide to use one of these, then the rule must be for consistency. Always promote the domain as a whole, do not ever leave out the suffix or prefix.

As a final note on domains with little differences, such as plurals and singulars, always try for the singular version whenever possible.

In summary, you now have the process necessary to make an informed decision on how to choose the right Domain Name. Following this advice will produce better results for your Online experience, I know this from personal experience.

Here are the main points again:

Associate one of these with your name;

1. Your geographic location
2. Your industry and/or main activity
3. Your registered business/entity name
4. Your main product or service name

Balance your name choice with the following;

1. Use an extension that suits
2. Include descriptive key words
3. Relate it to your business
4. Be legible and short
5. Be very memorable
6. Easy to spell, guessable
7. Avoid similarities, be original

Congratulations, by securing a strong and valuable Domain Name you are now well on the way to taking advantage of some exciting opportunities the Internet has to offer.

I sincerely trust you now know just a little more than you knew before, remembering:-

"Your tomorrow...is today's decisions!" (David Bunney)

Get your Domain Name online at www.elink.com.au

This article was researched and written by David Bunney.

Email contact mail@davidbunney.com
