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If I Were Starting Over in Domains in 2026, I’d Do This

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If I were starting over in domains in 2026, I would not try to do everything. I would try to do fewer things better.

That might sound obvious, but it runs against how most people enter this space. The instinct is to buy volume, chase trends, register names across every extension, and hope something sticks. I did some of that early on. Most long term investors I know did too. It is understandable. Domains feel inexpensive individually, so mistakes feel small. Over time, those small mistakes add up.

If I were starting fresh today, the first thing I would do is narrow my focus aggressively. One or two industries. One buyer profile. One way those buyers actually use domains. Not what investors talk about on forums, but what businesses pay for when it is their money on the line.

Experience teaches you that clarity beats optionality. The more specific your lens, the faster you learn what matters and what does not.

The second thing I would do is study buyers before I bought inventory. Not after. I would read acquisition announcements, look at how companies brand themselves, note how often founders use exact match names versus invented brands, and pay attention to who upgrades their domain and when. I would look at who buys aftermarket names quietly without announcing it.

Too many investors try to reverse engineer value from past sales alone. Sales data matters, but it is backward looking. Buyers tell you more through behavior than through comps. If you understand why someone buys, pricing becomes easier and holding decisions become calmer.

Third, I would treat renewals as a strategy, not an afterthought. One of the biggest shifts in my thinking over the years has been realizing that dropping names is not failure. It is discipline. If I were starting over, I would set strict rules around what earns another year in my portfolio.

Does this name still match a real buyer profile. Has demand improved, stayed flat, or quietly faded. Would I buy it again today at renewal cost if I did not already own it. If the answer is no, I would let it go without emotion.

Capital tied up in weak inventory is capital that cannot move toward better opportunities.

Next, I would price earlier and more deliberately. Many newer investors underprice out of fear or overprice out of hope. Neither helps. I would decide what kind of buyer I am targeting and price accordingly. Strategic buyers do not behave like bargain hunters. Bargain hunters rarely become strategic buyers.

Clear pricing also filters conversations. It saves time. It positions you as someone who understands what they own. That alone changes how inquiries feel.

Another thing I would do differently is write and share my thinking sooner. Not to build an audience for the sake of it, but to sharpen my own judgment. Explaining why you bought a name or why you passed on one forces clarity. Over time, patterns emerge. Those patterns become instinct.

Some of my best insights came not from sales, but from articulating why something did not sell.

Finally, I would play a longer game emotionally. Domains reward patience, but they punish impatience disguised as activity. Buying feels productive. Learning feels slow. In reality, the opposite is often true.

If I were starting over in 2026, I would spend more time watching, fewer dollars testing blindly, and more energy building conviction in a narrow lane. I would aim to be boring and right, not clever and busy.

The industry has changed. The fundamentals have not. Good domains still solve problems, reduce friction, and signal credibility. The investors who win over time are the ones who understand that and build their portfolios accordingly.

That is where I would start.
