

Title:

Choosing A Name For Your Company... That Makes Sense...

Word Count:

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Summary:

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So What?

So, if you're planning on running a professional operation, don't call it 'A1 Supplies' just because you want to be listed first in the phone book. You have to pick a name that says something abo...

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Article Body:

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So What?

So, if you're planning on running a professional operation, don't call it 'A1 Supplies' just because you want to be listed first in the phone book. You have to pick a name that says something about you and your business, and that people in your target market will be able to say without feeling stupid.

The Professional Name.

If you're running a serious business targeted at other businesspeople, you'll probably want to keep the name sober, but memorable. A good formula is your surname, followed by what you do: 'Smithfield Tailoring', or 'Watson Engineering'. You might also want to add the name of the town where you live: 'Watson Engineering Anytown'. Little things can make a big difference: 'Watson &

Associates Engineering' or 'Watson Engineering Co.' both sound quite good, for example. Don't use your first name, though -- it sounds terribly amateurish. Would you rather deal with Ted's Office Supplies or the Johansson Office Supplies Co.?

Another approach is to leave out your name altogether, and simply become 'Anytown Engineers' or 'The Anytown Engineering Co.'. This makes you sound like the first choice locally, especially if your main competitor has the name of another town nearby in their name.

The Corporate Name.

They sound quite bad, I reckon, but there's still a place for them -- mainly if you want to deal with the big companies that this kind of name appeals to. Simply think of a word to describe your business and translate it into Latin. Then add the word "Consulting", if you want.

The Trendy Name.

If you're going for a more young or technology-savvy market, you might want a less formal name. Names of this form should be kept to one word, and preferably written in lowercase, URL-style. Another common trick is to make '.com' part of the name. Notice the difference between 'Fun House' and 'funhouse.com' -- the Fun House doesn't sound all that much fun, does it?

The Playful Name.

You'll be surprised how many people will love your name if you just decide to name it after an animal, and use that animal in your logo too. If you don't have much of a marketing budget, this is a good way to get a quick brand identity -- if you choose the panda, for example, then people start associating you with pandas, and you can have panda-pattern designs on your stationery and decorate your office with bamboo. Don't underestimate the power of this, seriously.

The Shortened Name.

One naming method that seems to be especially well-used by the big hitters is to take two words that describe your business, shorten them both, and make it one word. So you end up with Fedex (Federal Express), or Microsoft (Microcomputer Software). This is good for suggesting what you do without having an overly lengthy name.

The Random Name.

If all else fails, a great way to make up a name is to just string together sounds that you like until you come up with a made-up word. This can be a surprisingly good way to come up with a name -- and it will be completely unique.

Make It Easy.

Whatever you do, though, make sure your business' name is easy to pronounce and spell. If your surname is hard to say, don't use it. If people seem to have trouble spelling a made-up word, come up with something easier. You'll lose out on an enormous amount of word-of-mouth business if people have to write your name down just to communicate it to each other.

Check for Others.

Once you've got some ideas, make sure you check that no-one else is already using them. It will be expensive to get halfway through starting up a company only to find that the name you wanted is already taken. Also, you'll have trouble establishing any kind of Internet presence with an over-used name, if that was part of your plan -- if your name is too common, you won't stand a chance of getting yourname .com.