

1. Domain Names

1.1 What is a Domain Name?

The domain name is the name of your webpage. It is sometimes also called the “address” or “IP address” for your webpage.

Internet users access your website using your domain name, in the same way that you ring a specific telephone number to call someone.

A domain name must be unique so that people who type in the domain name get the webpage they are after.

For example www.austcollege.com.au is how you access the College’s web site and no one else has that unique domain name.

1.2 Thinking of a Domain Name

The first step is to think of a name for your website. This may be your business name, however, in some instances you may wish for something slightly different depending on the purpose of your webpage, or you may be forced to adopt something different if the domain name you want has been taken by someone else.

Use the same criteria as you would for any business name, with the additional consideration that the name will be your webpage name and in many cases part of your email name.

Keep these thoughts in mind...

- ✓ Can I use my business name?
- ✓ Will it be too short?
- ✓ Will it be too long?
- ✓ Will it be easy to remember?
- ✓ Will people recognise “ME” from the name?
- ✓ Will it grab people’s attention?
- ✓ Will it be available?
- ✓ What alternatives can I use if my first choice is not available?

For example: The College website is www.austcollege.com.au yet the College’s name is The Australian College of Commerce and Management. As you can see by choosing a slight variation on the name we are still identifiable by our clients (You the students) and yet the name is still workable for the Internet...

Can you imagine if it was...

<http://www.theaustraliancollegeofcommerceandmanagement.com.au>

Way too long and too easy for people to make a spelling mistake.

Alternatively we could have used only our initials as the website address.

www.accm.com.au - very short and easy to spell, but, it doesn’t really identify who we are to potential clients, and that was an important consideration for us.

1.3 Special Bits about Domain Names

Other considerations for domain names:

- They can be up to 63 characters long – if you really want a long name
- Don't worry about punctuation - Don't add hyphens, unnecessary words like “the” or “a” unless there is a specific reason to do this.
- Domain names are NOT case sensitive – so ignore upper and lower case
- Consider registering your product names or even generic names instead of or as well as your business name eg abcbooks.com or books.com
- Multiple domain names are possible – with the extra ones simply being redirected to your main webpage (so one webpage – with multiple names)

1.4 The Domain Space or “Top Level Domain” (TLD)

A top-level domain (TLD) is the last part of an Internet domain name; that is, the letters which follow the final dot of any domain name. The most popular is .com

Often you won't be able to find your domain name available as a .com. So look for other options in the TLD areas that are relevant eg

- .com.au – showing you are an Australian business
- .biz. au – another TLD for Australian businesses
- .au.com – a newer TLD for Australian businesses

Note when you are looking at taking a domain name in a particular TLD – check who has that domain name in the more common TLDs – as if they are direct competitors that may impact your decision about your final domain name choice.

READING 2 – WHAT IS IN A NAME?

2. Business Names

Business names are an important image or branding consideration.

The name you use communicates messages to potential customers – whether you are aware of it or not. It also enables potential clients to recognise the type of business activity you do.

The goals with your business name should be:

1. describe the type of business
2. reflect the correct market position of your business
3. be able to be remembered
4. not have negative associations

2.1 Describe the Type of Business

While many of your customers will already know you – there is a large market out there that does not. It is therefore important to try and use your business name to communicate to potential customers what business you are in.

Consider the following 2 options:

1. ABC Company
2. Australian Book Company

With option 1 – it would be impossible for potential customers to know your business was about books ... In most cases – unless you have a huge budget to spend on brand awareness marketing campaigns – you would want to avoid your business name being initials or being shortened to initials.

Many businesses have company of inherited business names – so use registered business trading names to be able to select and market under a more appropriate name.

The other difficulty is that most popular business names are already taken and registered by someone else.

2.2 Reflect the correct market position of your business

The name also conveys impressions to potential customers. These impressions should reflect the actual market position you are planning to take in your market.

Consider the following options for our book business:

1. Jones Family Book Company
2. Australian Book Company
3. Diamond Book Company
4. Express Book Company
5. Better Value Book Company

Which name suggests a small business where you would deal directly with the owners? Which name suggests a big business where you could get items across the country? Which name suggests a business that deals in top of the market books?

Which name suggests business that is a mail order / on-line book business? Which name suggests a business that offers cheaper books?

It is important when considering a business name to “test” the reaction of people in your target market. See what image the name gives them – and whether that is the image you are after. Your business name should reflect your desired image.

The exercise is a simple one. Identify people who are NOT current customers (they will have existing impressions based on their interactions with you), but are in your target market.

Hand them a piece of paper with your planned name on it and get them to tell you / write down the instant impressions they get from the name.

2.3 College Case Study

The College undertook this name research activity a few years back. This is what we asked and the typical reactions we got back:

Please write down the first words that come into your head if you were asked to describe a business with the following name: Australian College of Commerce and Management.

Unprompted Responses:

▪ Big	▪ Australian
▪ Official	▪ Country wide
▪ Business college	▪ A TAFE
▪ Campuses	▪ Students
▪ Institution	▪ Bureaucracy

In interpreting these results we identified that the name – while being long – did give us an image of being a credible, official organisation that was Australia wide. But it also had some downsides – such as an expectation that students came to our campuses and our perceived size meant we would have rules and be bureaucratic. The name also didn’t reflect the range and nature of the services we provided to some target market groups.

So while we decided that the positives were sufficient to keep that name; we also recognised the other impressions that people might get – that we would need to counteract.

2.4 Be able to be Remembered

Your name should be able to be remembered without too much difficulty. Equally you don’t want something that no-one can remember the spelling to.

A catchy name is good (if it fits your image) but also make sure it’s not so clever that people don’t get the association of the name with the business.

2.5 No Negative Associations

Apart from ensuring you understand the image (including the downsides) of any business name you use ensure that you name isn’t so close to that of another business or product that you will bet confused customers. A good way of doing this is to look up the name on the web eg google and see what lists and whether that will impact you.