

Choosing a company name

Introduction

After [deciding on a payment structure](#) and deciding to [set up a limited company](#) you will need to choose a company name.

This article provides some advice and guidelines.

Think long term

When you are contracting the client rarely becomes aware of your company name, except perhaps if you invoice them directly. The choice of name is therefore less important than a company whose name is very client facing.

However, bear in mind that in the long term you might extend your contracting into other activities and your name will become more visible. If you are intending on using your company at a later date for purposes away from contracting then the choice of name will be important. It will need to communicate the right message, stand out to prospects and customers, and not get lost in the crowd.

Flexibility

A name that describes exactly what you do (e.g. Pete's Pizzas Limited) is useful from a marketing perspective. However, in the long term it can be restrictive when the company expands into other markets.

You are better off choosing a name that is more neutral, and perhaps describes how the work is done. E.g. Quality Solutions Limited.

Time sensitive words and Dates

Avoid the use of fashionable words that might become dated. For example 'Groovy Cars' may have sounded good in the 60's but doesn't fare well now. Names involving dates should also be avoided for similar reasons. For example '2005 fashions' will sound old in a few years time.

Internet Domain Names / Email

If you plan on using email and want to use something other than free email boxes like hotmail then you will need to purchase domain names. You will also need the domain names if you plan on having an internet presence.

Ensure you check before registering your company that the domain names have not already been registered and are available.

Trying to take ownership of domain names at a later date can be costly and time consuming. You can use www.Easily.co.uk for checking that any proposed domain names are available.

To avoid future problems it is useful to buy all the domain name variants available. E.g. '.com', '.co.uk', '.net', etc.

Spelling and Pronunciation

Make sure the name is easy to spell and pronounce. Avoid cute alternative spellings that could result in emails not getting through to you.

The basic test to use is that someone can easily understand the name over the phone, right down the name and your email address correctly.

Length

Long names can be less memorable than shorter names. You will also find short names advantageous when designing logos and business cards.

Companies House

[Companies House](#) acts as the central database for all firms in the UK and the agency must be notified when a business has settled on a name. This enables Companies House to check that the name hasn't been used elsewhere, but also to ensure that the name adheres to the relevant principles of law.

Your accountant will be able to help you register the company for you and might include this for free when you join them.

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