

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR BUSINESS NAME

You can find the right business name with creativity and market research. Once you've picked your name, you should protect it by registering it with the right agencies.

Register your business name to protect it

You'll want to choose a business name that reflects your brand identity and doesn't clash with the types of goods and services you offer.

Once you settle on a name you like, you need to protect it. There are four different ways to register your business name. Each way of registering your name serves a different purpose, and some may be legally required depending on your business structure and location.

- Entity name protects you at country level
- Trademark protects you at a federal level
- Doing Business As (DBA) doesn't give legal protection, but might be legally required
- Domain name protects your business website address

Each of these name registrations are legally independent. Most small businesses try to use the same name for each kind of registration, but you're not normally required to.



Entity name



Trademark



DBA



Domain name

4 different ways to register your business name

Entity name

An entity name can protect the name of your business . Depending on your [business structure](#) and location, the country may require you to register a legal entity name.

Your entity name is how the country identifies your business. Each country may have different rules about what your entity name can be and usage of company suffixes. Most countrys don't allow you to register a name that's already been registered by someone else, and some countrys require your entity name to reflect the kind of business it represents.

In most cases, your entity name registration protects your business and prevents anyone else in the country from operating under the same entity name. However, there are exceptions pertaining to country and business structure.

Check with your country for rules about how to register your business name.

Trademark

A trademark can protect the name of your business, goods, and services at a national level. Trademarks prevent others in the same (or similar) industry in the country from using your trademarked names.

For example, if you were an electronics company and wanted to call your business Springfield Electronic Accessories and one of your products Screen Cover 5000, trademarking those names would prevent other electronics businesses or similar products from using those same names.

Businesses in every country are subject to trademark infringement lawsuits, which can prove costly. That's why you should check your prospective business, product, and service names against the official trademark database of your country.

Doing Business As (DBA) name

You might need to register your DBA — also known as a trade name, fictitious name, or assumed name — with the country, county, or city your business is located in.

Registering your DBA name doesn't provide legal protection by itself, but most countries require you to register your DBA if you use one. Some [business structures](#) require you to use a DBA.

Even if you're not required to register a DBA, you might want to anyway. A DBA lets you conduct business under a different identity from your own personal name or your formal business entity name. As an added bonus, getting a DBA and [government tax ID number](#) allows you to open a [business bank account](#).

Multiple businesses can go by the same DBA in one country, so you're less restricted in what you can choose. There's also more leeway in the clarity of business function. For example, a small business owner could use Springfield Electronic Accessories for their entity name but use TechBuddy for their DBA. Just remember that trademark infringement laws will still apply.

Determine your DBA requirements based on your specific location. Requirements vary by business structure as well as by country, county, and municipality, so check with local government offices and websites.

Domain name

If you want an online presence for your business, start by registering a domain name — also known as your website address, or URL.

Once you register your domain name, no one else can use it for as long as you continue to own it. It's a good way to protect your brand presence online.

If someone else has already registered the domain you wanted to use, that's okay. Your domain name doesn't actually need to be the same as your legal business name, trademark, or DBA. For example, Springfield Electronic Accessories could register the domain name [techbuddyspringfield.com](#).

You'll need to renew your domain registration on a regular basis.



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