

Top 10 tips for choosing a business domain name

- 1) If you are buying a .co.uk domain name (e.g. newbusiness.co.uk), make sure you also buy the other main TLD's (Top Level Domains) for the same prefix (e.g. newbusiness.com, newbusiness.net). This will ensure that no-one else can come in at a later stage and capitalise on your brand name using another major domain name type. Although there are dozens of TLD types available, we've always purchased the .co.uk, .com, .net and .org variants to protect our brands. There's no harm buying more variants, but do make sure you take care of the important ones.
- 2) If you do a domain name search and find only the .co.uk is available for your chosen prefix (e.g. newbusiness), it may be worth your while choosing another domain name prefix where most or all of the TLD's are available. We spent quite some time researching suitable domain names before deciding on Bytestart - dozens in fact.
- 3) It is possible that your small business may grow into different areas of interest, or even change tack altogether. For this reason, it may be an idea not to make your domain name too specific to one area of your expertise.
- 4) Keep your domain name as short as possible and simple - it needs to be memorable, and preferably not contain hyphens.
- 5) A few web promotion firms suggest inserting your major keywords into your domain name wherever possible to help with your search engine rankings. We do not subscribe to this view. Sure, there may be some small benefits in having some keywords in your domain name (e.g. "the-best-web-designers.co.uk"), but your web promotion effort should come later. Your domain name should be chosen to best represent your company's interests rather than to please the fickle search engines!
- 6) Allowed characters - Domain names can only contain letters, numbers, and dashes. Spaces and symbols are not allowed. Domain names are not case sensitive.
- 7) Choose a reputable domain name supplier. A company which has been around a while and is well known is a good bet. We'd also recommend choosing a company which provides a user interface so that you can manually edit your domain name details (email forwarding, transferring your domain name elsewhere).
- 8) If you intend to buy a sizeable number of domains, try to 'park' them with one single domain name company. Domains are far easier to administrate and keep up-to-date if they are in a single place you trust.
- 9) You should ensure that your domain name is not a commonly known brand name or trademark. Something like "Microsoftwebdesign.co.uk" would not be a good choice!
- 10) Make sure you keep your contact information up-to-date. Although your domain name supplier is bound to contact you when a domain name comes up for renewal, it is your responsibility in the end. Going back to point 8) again, for this reason, having a single domain name supplier will help.