



BUSINESS **STARTUP**

BLUEPRINT

CHOOSING A BUSINESS NAME

TRANSCRIPT



All right, in this lesson, we're going to talk about one of my favorite things: coming up with a good business name. Let's think about what makes a good business name.

We want to make sure that it's something easy to remember and ties into our business differentiators or fits our business very well.

We also want to make sure that it's available. We don't want to have a business name that we can't use. So when we go through the brainstorming process, there are a few things that I like to do. First step, just brain dump.

Start writing out and brainstorming a whole bunch of business names, anything that kind of ties to it. To me, there's no right or wrong answers during this step. It's just the creative flow process. There are some great tools you can use.

You can use AI-powered business name generator tools like NameLix or ChatGPT. There's also a platform called Looka ([LOOKA.com](https://looka.com)) that you can use to brainstorm names, and it will do a few other checks for you at the same time.

As we brainstorm different names, we want to make sure they're available for registration. There are a few different places to check this. First, check in your local jurisdiction, your local area, to see if the business name is already being used.

Look up the business registry list with your local secretary of state and see if the name is available or not.

The tricky part is that something may seem available because it's spelled differently, but local regulations might find it too similar. So we want to make sure it's different enough not to get confused with our competitors.

The next step is to go online and see if the web domain is available.

Go to a web domain registrar like GoDaddy.com and search the domain names to see if they are available to register. A .com domain is stronger, but it may not be available.

Even if we put a dash or something else in there, we don't necessarily want to do that. We want it to be easy to remember and not too long. So we may need to go with a different domain extension, but this is an important step in researching the business name.

One of the last steps is to search the trademark database to see if it's already a trademarked name. This can be tricky and often requires help from a trademark attorney.

You can use companies like LegalZoom or go to the USPTO's website and use their TESS search to do preliminary research on trademark availability.

If you want your company to be national, this is an important step to ensure you're not infringing on someone else's trademark. Imagine your business gets up and running, and then someone else with a trademark sends you a cease and desist letter, forcing you to start over from scratch.

This has happened before, so it's an important step in the naming process.

When brainstorming business names, avoid a few key things. First, don't put the city name in the title unless you never plan to grow outside that city. It can limit your business. If you specialize in lawn care, use "lawn care" in your business name, or "coatings" if that's your specialty.

Make sure it's easy to remember. Avoid unique spellings that might confuse customers. When you have to explain your email address, business name, or web domain with unique spellings, it can be frustrating for both you and your customers.

After brainstorming, you'll have several business names that are reasonably available. The next step is to validate them with potential customers. Create a focus group with family, friends, and potential target customers. Give them a list of names and ask which ones they like best.

This helps ensure there's a good market fit with your target customers. Let me share an example. One of my businesses is Yeti Books, a bookkeeping company for home service companies like plumbing, cleaning, and electrical.

The name came from the idea that starting a business is like climbing a mountain, and the financials are the scary part. The Yeti, which is scary on a mountain, doesn't have to be. The Yeti knows the mountains better than anyone and can help you avoid pitfalls.

This brand imagery and word association resounded well with my target customers, making it a popular name.

As you brainstorm and validate your business names, follow these steps. I'm confident you can find a solid business name.

Summary of Key Points:

- **Brainstorming:**
 - Brain dump ideas without filtering
 - Use AI-powered tools like NameLix, ChatGPT, and Looka
- **Checking Availability:**
 - Check with local jurisdiction for name availability
 - Ensure the web domain is available (preferably .com)
 - Search the trademark database to avoid infringement
- **Avoid Common Pitfalls:**
 - Don't use city names unless you plan to stay local
 - Include relevant keywords in the name (e.g., lawn care)
 - Avoid unique spellings that are hard to remember or explain
- **Validation:**
 - Create a focus group with family, friends, and potential customers
 - Validate the name's appeal and market fit with target customers