

Domain Marketing for Powerful Branding

How to earn more Revenue, increase Visitor Numbers and Brand Awareness with the right Domain Name

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What Domain Names mean for Businesses

46 percent of U.S. small businesses still don't have a website for their company. Without a website, these businesses are missing the most critical piece to their overall success. No matter what the company size – when no online presence exists, users are unable to find your products, services and offerings.

Domain names form the basis of a business's digital identity. If you rely on nothing more than a Facebook page or an Instagram account you will become overly dependent on a single outlet and risk the success of your business on the popularity of a specific platform.

A domain name is much more than just a sign above a storefront. It plays an immensely important role in a business's marketing strategy, as it is used as the basis for measuring success in relation to many marketing goals. Domain marketing is not just about ensuring that you have an internet presence with just any URL: your highest priority should be which domain name is used, and how.



1.

10 Golden Rules for Successful Domain Marketing

1. First Impressions

count

The search for a suitable name for your own business can take at minimum months sometimes longer, and there is a lot riding on selecting the right one.

After all, your web address' URL is everywhere: it appears on the entrance of your office, on your business cards, letterhead, and in every advertising campaign you ever run, whether on or offline. As is so often the case, first impressions count, which is why we assert that the name chosen must be a perfect fit for you and for those trying to find you. It also should be easily understood, accessible and get you noticed. Even at this stage, mistakes are often made, especially with young new companies who often select names that contain puns attempting to appear unique, sassy and smart.

Newslinn is an online platform that supports local communities abroad to safely share news with journalists. In its infancy they went

live with the all too quirky and hard-to-communicate URL: on.thespot.photos. Then they shifted to the short lived and very cumbersome: www.thisisonthespot.com. As the forum grew, these hard learned lessons of what makes a great name led to the much more succinct: newslinn.com.

Herein lies the problem with trying to be funny or overly trendy: the name usually requires expensive, aggressive marketing or even an explanation to go with it for it to be even the least bit understandable and/or memorable. The worst case scenario would be potential customers will never find the website again and will revert to competitors whom they already know.

How can you prevent that? With the tried and true KISS rule: keep it simple, stupid! The shorter and simpler the name, the easier it is to remember.

2.

2. Domain names and brands must align

Despite our recommendations, many businesses address the need for a suitable web address after it's too late and end up using a subpar domain which weakens their brand profile. Twitter began with twttr.com because this name was still available to register. Fortunately, they realized that twitter.com was a better domain and just six months later they purchased that domain which is still being used today. There are countless other stories about businesses that only bought the domain name they really wanted after they became famous: including Facebook, Instagram, Tesla and many more.

Then you have companies who still don't own their domain names like Nissan. Instead Uzi Nissan, a computer store owner, has been a thorn in the side of the large auto manufacturer since 1994 causing the more well-known Nissan to operate at nissanmotors.com and later nissanusa.com.





3. Consider domains in your plans for international expansion

Sooner or later, every ambitious business with its own website is faced with the question of what the right domain strategy is for a planned international expansion. For instance, if the company already operates say in Germany; it is highly likely that it uses a .de domain with a German-language web presence. An expansion into neighboring countries or markets will quickly trigger the question of whether this web presence should be expanded with additional, country-specific top-level domains, such as `company.fr` or `businessname.es`. Alternatively, a directory-style domain strategy could be used, with `businessname.com/de`, `businessname.com/fr`, and so on. It's worth giving yourself plenty of time to figure out the optimal approach and weighing the pros and cons.

The American company, Nabisco who manufactures Oreo went a different route by utilizing a collective European web presence for its range of cookies, at `oreo.eu`. The domain homepage leads to links to various country-specific subdomains such as `de.oreo.eu` and `fr.oreo.eu`.

The important thing is to ensure that you secure the rights to your domain names in the relevant language with the appropriate "country code Top Level Domains" (ccTLDs).



4.

Creating buzz BEFORE a launch

A new car, an innovative smartphone, or a brand new innovation in technology: products like these often come as a surprise when they hit the market. Competitors should learn about the launch as late as possible to limit their time to react and, to ensure that the planned marketing campaign achieves its full effect. Additionally, it must also come as a surprise to customers.

But in the modern information age, it's not easy to keep secrets like these confidential. Marketing campaigns need to be prepared and a descriptive web address for the product is often at the core of those campaigns. However, when businesses in the public eye suddenly register new domains, they attract the attention of fans, media, and competitors. Make a virtue out of necessity and begin an elaborate new domain. Rumors are typically generated about newly registered domains during the lead-up to major trade shows or industry events, building interest and curiosity. Then the big product launch takes place at the trade show itself.

5.

Save on advertising costs with a good domain

The following example proves that effective domains can also have a positive effect within marketing budgets. In 2016, the German media conglomerate, RTL Interactive launched a new campaign for the celebrity portal, VIP.de, with the short and catchy domain name as its central concept. With the slogan "Your shortcut to the stars" they gave examples of long and complicated domain names, such as www.wer-mit-wem-was-wann-wo-wie.de [how-and-where-who-did-what-with-whom.de], before automatically redirecting to the short URL, vip.de, with the comment "too long for us."

The website was also featured in 11-second long commercials. Every millisecond counts within expensive advertising and vip.de was much more cost effective than its alternatives.





6.

.shop, .club or .agency: STAND OUT with an nTLD!

Since 2013, over 1,000 new Top-Level Domains (nTLDs) have been introduced including .shop, .pizza and .design, as well as geographic extensions such as .nyc, .boston and .cologne, as well as branded TLDs including .google and .canon. These nTLDs offer businesses an enormous degree of creative flexibility to increase their campaign profiles and exposure for specific projects through their domain names.

For example, Skype decided to secure its own domain extension, promoting both its brand and the service it offers using the Call.skype address. The Manhattan-based university, Pace University is now utilizing Pace.NYC to launch new public programming initiatives and provide an inside track on related events. And the rapper, 50 Cent, has his homepage at 50inda.club in reference to his biggest hit, "In Da Club".

By using a new TLD, you stand out from the crowd and also take advantage of the fact that many new domains are still available and can be secured with ease.

7.

Avoid embarrassing domain name mishaps

Spaces, an apostrophe or reading the domain extension as part of the address can all lead to domain faux pas.

Case in point: the Italian battery company, Powergen, thought it would be a good idea to create a website using powergenitalia.com domain. However, this does not translate batteries or power to consumers! Instead, they immediately think “powerful genitalia”. It is unknown whether this choice was the result of someone’s vengeful juvenile sense of humor or complete cluelessness; however, the address is now no longer online.

There are countless other examples from this category, all of which show that marketing departments considered their domain’s presence and potential meanings far too late. Our tip: be absolutely sure that you test your brand name with its preferred spelling in combination with all the major domain extensions so that there are no embarrassing “domain hacks.”



8.

Domain + Authority = More Traffic

Graham Haynes, a British furniture entrepreneur, spent over \$50,000 for the BedroomFurniture.co.uk domain, recording annual revenue of \$7M USD a short time later. However, it became clear to him that his domain name, BedroomFurniture.co.uk, would limit his long-term options as far as the products he could offer.

He decided to buy the premium domain, furniture.co.uk, at a cost of \$650,000 and take advantage of the benefits offered by such a descriptive name: credibility within the market and organically generated traffic. He opted for the .co.uk extension as these domains attract 70% more clicks than .com

domains in the British market. Haynes' hunch that users would automatically seek out the supplier with the domain name that was closest to the topic they were searching for, namely "furniture," was spot on and he struck gold, with an almost instant 5% boost to his profitability. Assuming this profit growth continues over the next 20-25 years, he will certainly recover his \$650,000 acquisition costs.

Be an industry leader with category killer domains

There are many brand names that have become generic terms for their product category over time. These include Coke, Band-Aid, Chapstick, Polaroid, and Jeep. Category killer domain names seek to achieve the opposite effect, associating the generic name with the specific product or offer. Prominent examples of this category killer strategy include soups.com for Campbell Soups and clothes.com for the ecommerce brand Zappos.

If you secure glasscleaner.com for window cleaning products, you will be the manufacturer that anyone looking for a glass cleaning product will turn to. The generic name is associated with your specific product and the business behind it, building trust and positively influencing the customer's purchase decision. Where else would customers look to buy the product? After all, your product must be the industry leader with a domain name like that!

9.

Don't throw in the towel if your dream domain isn't available

Many companies make the fatal mistake of not deciding on a company name in parallel with their search for a domain name. Once you have a business name, you need to establish whether the domain with the same name is already registered. All good (meaning short and memorable) domain names are already assigned to owners. Nevertheless, it is still entirely possible to secure the domain name you really want, as the current domain owners are frequently willing to sell.

Before settling for second or third best, we recommend that you use a domain auction platform such as Sedo.com to search for your preferred domain. It may be available for sale there, even if the domain registrar has not listed it as such.

If it's not being offered for sale, that's where a domain broker can help. While you remain anonymous as the buyer, your domain broker will identify the current domain owner, explain your interest in purchasing the domain, and lead the purchase negotiations.

Hundreds of previously-assigned domain names are bought and sold each day, so chances are good that this will work out for you as well!



Brands already using Premium Domains:

Brand	Domain
American Express	Open.com
Apple	Apple.com
Disney	Family.com
Honda	Motorcycles.com
Kay Jewelers	Gold.com
Monster	Jobs.com
Nestle	Meals.com
Pfizer	Arthritis.com
SalesForce	Data.com
Sherwin Williams	Painting.com
XEROX	Documents.com

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