

Dos and Don'ts of choosing a winning business name

Do ...

- keep your name short and snappy – no more than 3 or 4 syllables is best
- choose a name that tells customers what's special about you and why they should choose you over the competition. **Funky Frocks** tells women what they can expect before they even set foot inside your shop
- get your name checked out by a foreign language specialist if you intend to sell abroad, or even to non-English speakers at home
- make sure all words in your name are easy to pronounce if you're hoping for word-of-mouth recommendations. This is particularly important if you have customers whose first language isn't English
- check how your name looks when written down, especially when all the words are run together in your web address. **Experts Exchange** can be read Expert Sex Change and **Therapist** can be read as The Rapist

Don't ...

- use your own name for your business. You know who you are, but do other people?
- limit your appeal by including your home town or district in your name. **Tewkesbury Taxis** and **Havant Heating Engineers** might be overlooked by people who don't live in Tewkesbury or Havant
- choose a name consisting only of initials, unless you always accompany it in promotional material, on stationery, company vehicles etc by a byline eg **HSBC** – the world's local bank. People don't have a clue what initials stand for
- include overused words like **Innovative**, **Premier** and **Quality** in your name. They don't tell potential customers anything and don't distinguish you from thousands of other companies
- base your name on cringe-making puns. They might seem funny at first but humour palls after a while