

Winning The (Domain) Name Game

By Paula Morrow

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What's in a name? In a word: Everything!

Choosing an appropriate domain name for your web site is one of the first and most critical decisions you'll have to make on the road to Internet success.

What Makes A Great Domain Name?

Is it punchy, sticks in the mind, is short and fits your product/service? Does it begin with a letter closer to the beginning of the alphabet, instead of towards the end? If so, and it's not taken, you may have a winner!

However, with more than 60,000 new domain names being registered each month, many of the short, memorable, two-word names have already been snapped up. But don't despair: there are other ways to win at the domain game.

Expired or 'On-Hold' Domain Names

Every day, domain names come up for renewal. And every day, the owners let them slip away. Why? Either they've gone out of business, or simply forget to renew. You can use free web sites to monitor these domains, and you may get lucky. As a bonus, your new name may come with built-in traffic!

Just be aware: many people are actively searching for good domain names to buy and sell, at a profit. For example, one domain, <http://www.business.com>, sold for millions! So be warned: if you see a name you want, don't wait - grab it.

I've successfully used lists posted on the following two sites: <http://deleteddomains.com> and <http://www.dailyexpireddomains.com>. You'll soon notice that some names are available immediately, while some are 'on hold.'

Technically, once expired, all names are available. However those that have expired within the past 45 to 60 days are in a grace period. Prior owners are given the chance to make good on their debt. If they don't, and the grace period expires, the name is 'deleted' from the master domain registry. It is then available for purchase by others.

The date of expiration is posted. If your dream name is 'on hold,' you'll need to pay close attention to the lists. When the one you want is finally free, buy it quick.

Expired domain names can be purchased at any domain registration site. I continue to prefer <http://www.godaddy.com> , since buying a name through them for a year still costs under \$10.

Once you've bought the domain, immediately make an appointment with yourself for one month BEFORE the domain expires, to renew. Don't forget and have your business name slip away!

One last tip: Reserve your own name as a domain. For example, I've reserved <http://www.paulamorrow.com> . Even though you may never actually use it as a web site, this at least insures that no one else will either! Take your name off the market.

The Great Suffix Debate

As more and more people come online, and the stronger names are taken off the market, there will be more 'suffixes' added to expand registration options. Currently, the following endings are available: .com, .net, .org, .info, .biz, .ws, and .us. With more to come.

If at all possible, choose a domain name ending in .com ('dot-com'). This is still the most widely recognized ending, and the most popular. When typing in a domain name, people will still, by default, try .com first. The next popular ending after .com is .net -- but always try for a .com name, if at all possible.

As you make this very important decision choose well because, if you're successful, you'll be living with it for a very long time.

Paula Morrow heads <http://www.idealmarketingcorp.com> . She specializes in public relations, information marketing and creating cashflow systems. Her newsletter, IDEALProfits, is now read in 12 countries. Subscribe and receive 5 BONUS ebooks worth \$149! <http://www.idealmarketingcorp.com/subscribe.html>

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