

# BUYING AND SELLING DOMAIN NAMES

Can your customers find you online?  
Here are some helpful hints to make it easier for everyone to access you online in future

FAILURE to secure your brand online through well thought-out domain names has proved an expensive mistake for many companies worldwide. With some careful planning and simple strategies, you can ensure you make decisions that won't cost you in the long run.

Your domain name should be a key part of your online marketing campaign, whether it's your primary domain name or simply an additional domain for niche marketing.

## **Closely match your business name**

Many of your existing customers, or potential customers who have heard of you will attempt to guess your domain name. The closer you get to your actual business name, the better chance you have of capturing those who seek you.

Shorter domain names are easier to remember, so if your business name is

more than three words long, consider dropping words that are generic (like services or solutions) or abbreviating where possible.

## **Secure .com.au and .com**

Many businesses rely on just one domain name, but an effective strategy is to consider the advantages of securing multiple relevant domain names.

The best place to start is to purchase the .com.au and .com versions of your business name. Many customers will accidentally add or remove the .au from a domain name. Owning both ensures you receive all the emails and website traffic trying to find you.

There are other advantages too. A .com.au identifies you as an Australian business which brings with it the implicit trust of dealing with a company

operating under our laws and regulations. Using a .com.au also ensures your entry into Google's Australian search engine, google.com.au.

Ownership of a .com.au is regulated and reserved for registrations of Australian businesses. This means there is a strong chance you will be able to purchase the domain name you desire in connection with your business name.

A .com on the other hand is your ticket to global trading and to be considered a serious player in the international market, you must have a .com. In a global sense, the .com domain name is by far the most popular and recognised.

Due to the popularity of .coms, you may experience difficulty with name availability. If your business name is unique or regionalised, you stand a good chance of being able to purchase



your .com. If on the other hand you're looking for a generic domain name, like CairnsAccommodation.com, chances are it will be taken.

Since .coms are not regulated, anyone can purchase them and this is where the mischief happens. Your competitors can purchase your business name as a .com if you don't own it and direct traffic to their website. Similarly, you can do the same to them, but that's not very nice now, is it?

Check name availability at the following sites:

- .com.au: [www.mywebname.com.au](http://www.mywebname.com.au)
- .com: [www.betterwhois.com](http://www.betterwhois.com)

### What about .net?

While .com is the most popular domain name extension, .net.au and .net extensions are often used by businesses that failed to secure a .com. The only disadvantage to having a .net is that your customers may accidentally type in .com instead.

### Tricks of the trade

If your business name is tricky to spell, it may be prudent to consider purchasing common misspellings of your business name as a domain name. The best move is to claim the obvious ones so your competitors don't take advantage of them.

A great example of this is the Australian accommodation specials giant, Wotif. Many people try to spell their name as What If, and try typing [www.whatif.com](http://www.whatif.com). You won't find what you're looking for. In fact, Wotif have created an entire page that explains how to spell their business name due to the tricky nature of it: <http://www.wotif.com/whatif.jsp>.

### What's a name worth?

Have you bought some domain names over the years and are thinking of selling them for profit? Determining their worth is often difficult, but here are some considerations that may increase or decrease the purchase price:

1. shorter domain names are worth more
2. hyphens devalue a domain name
3. misspellings are not worth much
4. generic industry terms are gold
5. extensions other than .com are worth less.

Finding a buyer for a domain name can be difficult unless you've got an established website at your domain.

### Make a list

Some businesses applying these tips will produce an excessively long list of domain names they want to purchase, so it's important you consider the options most relevant to you.

The best way to thoroughly examine all your domain name options is to brainstorm a list. Consider all the words associated with your business, industry and location. Write various combinations of these words which are short, memorable, easy to spell and represent your core business.

### Who should you buy through?

Ideally you should find a reputable local company to organise the registration of your domain names. Most web hosts will register your domain names and monitor when they need renewing.

While prices vary competitively, you should expect to pay about \$40 a year for a .com and \$99 a year for a .com.au with a company that will manage and maintain your domain renewal for you.

You can contact domain registrars directly and in some cases save on the cost of domain names, particularly with the registration of a .com. Do a search in Google for 'domain registration.'

The major advantage of registering through a management company is the peace of mind that you won't accidentally lose your domain name upon renewal and the assurance of a local number to call for support.

### Nicky Jurd

Director – [cityofcairns.com](http://cityofcairns.com)

[nicky@cityofcairns.com](mailto:nicky@cityofcairns.com)