

## Choosing a Business Name

Your business name needs to do several things. It must:

- **Describe** what you do
- Be easy to **pronounce**
- **Attract customers**
- Be **unique**
- Be **available**

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To choose a name for your event planning company, start by taking a look in the phone book or on the Internet to see the names that other event planners have chosen. Notice which names stand out.

When you hear a name like **Bravo Productions** (a California-based company that organizes corporate events throughout the U.S.) doesn't it conjure up a vision of events that people will love? Likewise, **A Perfect Production** (the name of a successful Lake Oswego, Oregon company) sounds like it offers events that will be, of course, perfect. You might consider choosing a **creative** name, like the owners of **Cosmo Cool Concepts**, a leading party planning company in Houston. Or you might choose a name that clearly communicates what your company does, such as Extraordinary Events (an event planning company with offices in California, New York, Florida, and Nevada).

When you've decided on a few names that sound fabulous, let some **friends** and colleagues know what you're thinking of calling your business, and ask for their comments and opinions. The decision is still up to you, of course, but the instant reactions of "real people" can be a good indication of whether you are on the right track or not.

In most jurisdictions, if you operate under anything other than your own name, you are required to file for a **fictitious name**. It's usually just a short form to fill out and a small filing fee that you pay to your state or provincial government. You can find links to the appropriate government departments for filing your name at:

**SBA: Business Names**

<http://www.sba.gov/hotlist/businessnames.html>

Before registering a fictitious name, you will need to make sure it does not belong to anyone else. You certainly wouldn't want to spend your initial investment money, only to find out you couldn't legally operate under a name you had chosen because

someone else owns the trademark. So do some research on the names you like. You can do an online search of the federal trademark database to determine whether a name has already been registered. For good advice on trademarks and other matters to consider before choosing a business name visit:

### **Nolo Resource Center**

Click on **Business and Human Resources**, then on **Starting a Business**, then on **Naming Your Business** <http://www.nolo.com>

Most start-up businesses do not bother to trademark their names because it can be costly and time-consuming. However, if your company name is truly unique, you might want to consider it. You can try doing it yourself, or hire a lawyer to do it for you.

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