

Business

Dreams to Reality

Brainstorming Your Way
To Starting Your
Business



STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

Let's dive in on topics such as:

- Determining your business name
- Determining the purpose of your business and if you will sell products or services
- Establishing a legal structure, bank account, payment processor, and accounting system
- Exploring your present and future goals
- Establishing your target audience
- Create your brand's visual identity (logo, tagline, brand colors, typography, and voice)
- Developing your website's objective and user actions while on site
- Exploring websites you like & dislike, and specifics explaining your reasoning

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WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

Determining your business name is the first step in moving forward.

Keep it simple, unique, and easy to Google.

You will want to make sure it isn't taken by another company. Do Google searches. Check social media.

Check with the state corporation commission to see if the name has been taken on a state level.

Check on a Federal level as well.

The Small Business Association has great information:

<https://www.sba.gov/business-guide>

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SOCIAL MEDIA NAMES

The you pick will need to be available across all social media platforms, as well as domain availability.

Keep this in mind when searching.

For example, for Mountain Cane Media, we have the same handle across all platforms. This includes:

- Pinterest
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- TikTok

You DO NOT have to develop all of these platforms (and we don't suggest it right away), but having the same name across social media will be beneficial for when you want to by making it easy for your customers to find you.

Simply type your name ideas into these platforms to see what is out there.

DOMAIN NAMES

You can check domain availability at Google Domains. It has the low cost yearly rates and includes privacy for your personal information, whereas many other domain registration companies offer that as an extra service.

Go to Google Domains and type in the domain you desire to see if it is available.

The worksheets on the following pages will help you search and organize your findings. When you have found the social names and domain that suits your brand, secure them.

BUSINESS NAME IDEAS

IDEA #1



What is the story behind this name choice? What makes it special for you? This will be something you will want to share with your customers on social media. It personalizes you and gives them a reason to want to do business with you. Write this here or on the back of this paper- make notes in your phone. Somewhere. Just know why you chose this.

Check social media:
What variations of this name choice are available across all platforms?

Domain Availability:

Brainstorming other ideas from this name:

BUSINESS NAME IDEAS

IDEA #2



What is the story behind this name choice? What makes it special for you? This will be something you will want to share with your customers on social media. It personalizes you and gives them a reason to want to do business with you. Write this here or on the back of this paper- make notes in your phone. Somewhere. Just know why you chose this.

Check social media:
What variations of this name choice are available across all platforms?

Domain Availability:

Brainstorming other ideas from this name:

BUSINESS NAME IDEAS

IDEA #3



What is the story behind this name choice? What makes it special for you? This will be something you will want to share with your customers on social media. It personalizes you and gives them a reason to want to do business with you. Write this here or on the back of this paper- make notes in your phone. Somewhere. Just know why you chose this.

Check social media:
What variations of this name choice are available across all platforms?

Domain Availability:

Brainstorming other ideas from this name:

YOUR BUSINESS'S PURPOSE

What are your overall goals for your business? Are you selling products or services? Perhaps you are a musician or artist wanting to displaying your portfolio, or a blogger painting pictures with words.

Brainstorm what you know, want to know, and have learned from researching your interests on the following pages. Knowing your business goals will help you optimize your website to achieve them.



WHAT SERVICES WILL YOU OFFER?

WHAT I KNOW I WANT TO OFFER:

WHAT I WANT TO KNOW: DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW YOU WILL OFFER THIS SERVICE? WHAT ELSE MAY YOU WANT TO OFFER IN THE FUTURE?

WHAT I LEARNED: WRITE A PARAGRAPH DESCRIBING THIS SERVICE TO YOUR CUSTOMERS, ITS BENEFITS, AND CALL THEM TO ACTION (WHY THEY SHOULD PURCHASE FROM YOU).



COMPLETE THIS SHEET FOR EACH SERVICE/ SERVICE CATEGORY YOU WILL OFFER.

WHAT PRODUCTS WILL YOU OFFER?

WHAT I KNOW I WANT TO OFFER:

WHAT I WANT TO KNOW: DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW YOU WILL OFFER THIS PRODUCT? WHAT ELSE MAY YOU WANT TO OFFER IN THE FUTURE?

WHAT I LEARNED: WRITE A PARAGRAPH DESCRIBING THIS PRODUCT TO YOUR CUSTOMERS, ITS BENEFITS, AND CALL THEM TO ACTION (WHY THEY SHOULD PURCHASE FROM YOU).



COMPLETE THIS SHEET FOR EACH PRODUCT/PRODUCT CATEGORY YOU WILL OFFER.



LEGALITIES, BANKING, & ACCOUNTING

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LEGAL STRUCTURE

To get up and running, you will need to set your business up. Inquire in your location about a Business License. Determine your Business's structure. Would you like to be a sole proprietor? An LLC?

Do you have an accountant or trusted source who can help you make these decisions?

MONEY MATTERS

Register for Your EIN Number and Tax State numbers. These numbers are identifiers for your business, such as your social security number, but they are specific to your business. They will let your business pay taxes.

Setting up a business bank account is essential in keeping your personal and business finances separate. It also makes you look professional in front of your clients.

PAYMENT PROCESSORS

You will also need the EIN to set up your business bank account and your payment processor, such as PayPal or Stripe.

Sign up for PayPal or Stripe under their business settings.

Be sure to keep record of your login information. This payment processor will be integrated later into your website, if applicable. It is also useful in sending invoices if you are not automating your checkout.

ACCOUNTING

Determine how you want to keep track of your expenses. There are many apps/software that you can try. Wave is an easy free option. Quickbooks is a paid version, but very popular. You may just want to use a simple spreadsheet in your google Drive account.

Be sure to add any payments you made for your business license, etc when establishing your business. Keep this system in place and add your expenses along the way.





YOUR GOALS YOUR AUDIENCE

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PRESENT AND FUTURE

GOALS & AUDIENCE

Business Name:

Your Company's Mission Statement (your goals, philosophies, define your business and why it exists, your competitive advantages).

Who is your target audience? Who will you be marketing to? What is your buyer persona (what demographics will you target? Their ages? Their income range? Their life stage (adolescence, parenthood, retirement, etc).

What are you short term goals?

Where do you see your company in 5 years?

How would you like your customers to describe you?

Brand Identity

A quick glance is all you have to make an impression of your brand, so make it a lasting one. Create a visual identity that imprints the name and face of your business to memory.



VISUAL IDENTITY

LOGO, COLOR & TYPOGRAPHY

Is there a particular style of logo you like?

- Just font, with no symbols
- Monogram
- Font inside of a shape
- Abstract icon
- Silhouette
- Badges or crests

Do you have a tag line? If so, do you want your tag line included with your logo?

What type of fonts do you like?

- San-Serif
- Serif
- Script
- Eroded/Grunge
- Typewriter
- Handwritten

Explore font combinations at fontjoy.com

Write some of your favorites here:

Do you have a color palette for your business? If not, what colors do you enjoy? What colors do you feel flow well together?

Create color palette combinations from a brand photo here:

<https://www.canva.com/colors/color-palette-generator/>

or explore their color schemes here:

<https://www.canva.com/colors/color-palettes/>

Write some of your favorites here:

VISUAL IDENTITY

ICONIC IMAGERY, STYLE,
ADJECTIVES

What types of Images do you feel represent your brand? Examples: Paintbrush, Knife, Tree, etc.

What Styles do you feel represent your brand? For Example: Modern, Playful, Classical, etc.

How do you want your client to feel when they interact with your business? What vibe do you hope to convey?

Please provide a link to a public Pinterest board that conveys the vision you have for your brand.

Five adjectives to describe your company, your brand:

"You have to question yourself in order to create".

Alexis Perry

BRAND VOICE

PERSONAL DECISIONS & INTERACTIONS

What types of clothes will you wear?
Do you have a signature outfit?

Will you have a pseudonym or other name?

Will you be unaccepting of criticism in an attempt to grow only an audience of true followers, or will you take suggestions and criticisms from your audience seriously - and try to change?

Will you lean into a particular trait or characteristic to grow an audience?
Example: Jenna Kutcher is a "mac & cheese lover."

Will you leverage aspects of your personal life in public to win over your audience?
your children?
your pets?

Will you have a hashtag for your personal brand?



WEBSITE PLANNING

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WEBSITE PLANNING

DESIGN OBJECTIVES & USER ACTIONS



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What kind of website do you need?

- Simple informational website
- Membership website
- eCommerce store set up
- Event Calendar & Ticketing
- Blog
- Portfolio
- Resume

What are the major objectives of your website?

- Build an online community
- Generate sales
- Create awareness
- Marketing and advertising

Describe the activities you would like users to perform on your website.

- Subscribe to a newsletter
- Follow on social media
- Share articles
- Download resources
- Purchase merchandise
- Contribute comments

WEBSITE PLANNING

LIKES & DISLIKES

Please list 3 (three) Websites that you LIKE from ANY niche in ANY location.
Specify the features & benefits you like about it.

Liked Website #1 URL

Liked Website #2 URL

Liked Website #3 URL

Please list 3 (three) Websites that you DISLIKE from ANY niche in ANY location.
Specify the features & benefits you dislike about it.

Disliked Website #1 URL

Disliked Website #2 URL

Disliked Website #3 URL

CHECKLIST

BUSINESS NAME IDEAS:
DOMAIN & SOCIAL PLATFORMS

DETERMINE PURPOSE OF BUSINESS
(PRODUCTS/SERVICES IF APPLICABLE)

LEGAL STRUCTURE & BUSINESS LICENSE

EIN NUMBER

BUSINESS BANK ACCOUNT

PAYPAL OR STRIPE ACCOUNT FOR
RECEIVING PAYMENTS

DETERMINE YOUR ACCOUNTING
SYSTEM: APP? SIMPLE
SPREADSHEET? HAVE SOMETHING IN
PLACE AND USE ALONG THE WAY.

GOALS & AUDIENCE

LOGO/ TAGLINE/ VISUAL
BRANDING/ BRAND VOICE

WEBSITE PLANNING

GOAL

PLAN

ACTION