



The startup naming & trademark checklist

Naming is the early decision that is most expensive to reverse. Work down this list before you commit to a name, so you land on one you can actually own: an available .com, clear of same-class US and EU trademarks.

1 Get the positioning straight first

- ☐ Write one sentence: what you do, and for whom.
- ☐ Pick a register on purpose: literal, evocative, or abstract.
- ☐ List 5 to 10 seed words and 3 names you admire, with why.

2 Generate real candidates

- ☐ Short, pronounceable, spellable after hearing it once.
- ☐ Skip generic dictionary words you can never own or defend.
- ☐ Build a shortlist of 10 to 15 before you start filtering.

3 Own the .com

- ☐ Confirm the exact .com is available, checked live, not cached.
- ☐ Treat a taken .com as a hard filter, not a "maybe later".
- ☐ Keep an alternative only when its .com is genuinely free.

4 Screen the trademark, US and EU

- ☐ Search the US register (USPTO) for exact and phonetic matches.
- ☐ Search the EU register (EUIPO) too if you will sell into Europe.
- ☐ Check the relevant Nice class, not just the bare word.
- ☐ Treat a live same-class mark as a red flag, not a footnote.

A register search is not legal clearance. It tells you where the obvious conflicts are; for a legal opinion, consult a trademark attorney.

5 Score defensibility, not vibes

- ☐ Rate each name on two axes: domain ownability and trademark headroom.
- ☐ Favour names that are both free to own and clear in their class.
- ☐ Drop anything that fails either axis, however much you like it.

6 Final gut checks

- ☐ Say it on a call, then spell it once. Does it survive both?
- ☐ Check for unfortunate meanings in other languages.
- ☐ Confirm the social handles are close enough to workable.
- ☐ Sit with your top two for a day before you buy.

Do the whole list in 10 minutes.

Startup Name Generator produces brandable names whose .com is available right now, checked live against the registry, then screens each one against the US (USPTO) and EU (EUIPO) trademark registers. Free to generate names and check domains.

startupnamegenerator.com