



## Beginners Guide to Business Names

There are various regulations concerning business names and the purpose of this Beginners Guide is to provide a simple explanation of what you have to show where.

The first point to note is that this Beginners Guide isn't really about what name to choose when incorporating a company or starting a business. There are a whole host of things to consider some of which relate to branding and marketing as well as the rules on what words are or aren't allowed in the legal name of a company.

But once you have a business what do you have to do?

Companies have to display their registered name anywhere they do business, but this can be the inside or the outside of buildings. Companies (Trading Disclosures) Regulations 2008.

The rules say that a company's name must be displayed in a continuous way and it must be easily seen by any visitor to that office, place or location. The exception to this that the company's name does not have to be displayed at a location which is primarily used for living accommodation and also if the company has been dormant since incorporation.

In circumstances where a given location is shared by six companies or more, each company can display its name in a non-continuous way. Each such company is only required to display its registered name for at least fifteen continuous seconds at least once in every three minutes.

A company is also required to identify, any place, other than a company's registered office, at which it has available for inspection any company record which it is required under the Companies Acts to keep available for inspection.

Companies are obliged to publish their registered name and number in various places. Those provisions also apply to emails and companies' websites under the Companies (Registrar, Languages and Trading Disclosures) Regulations 2006.

A company's full legal name (as distinct from its trading name) must appear in legible characters in all:

- business letters and order forms
- its notices and other official publications
- its websites
- bills of exchange, promissory notes, endorsements, cheques and orders for money and goods purporting to be signed by or on behalf of the company
- its bills of parcels, invoices, receipts and letters of credit

In addition, business letters, order forms and websites of the company must also detail:

- the company's place of registration (eg England and Wales)
- its registered number
- the address of its registered office.

**These requirements apply to all such documents, whether they are in hard copy, electronic or any other form.**



**OK! So what does all this mean in practice?** The things to check are stationery, letterhead, emails, websites...and every building the company uses. Are you up-to date with the regulations?

### Need more help

We are always here to help, so get in touch and ask...

This Beginners Guide is no substitute for proper professional advice and no liability is accepted by Jonathan Vowles Chartered Accountants for any action or inaction taken as a result of reading this leaflet.

© 2008-10  
Jonathan Vowles  
Chartered Accountants



is an independent firm of  
accountants, tax advisors and  
business advisors

114 High Street  
Cranfield  
MK43 0DG

Tel 01234 752566

Tel 01908 616104

Fax 01234 752577

info@vowles.co.uk

www.vowles.co.uk