



“HOW TO...” FAQ

Register a Trade Name

What is a trade name?

A company typically uses a trade name to conduct business using a simpler name rather than using their formal and often lengthier name. Trade names are also used when a preferred name cannot be registered, often because it may already be registered or is too similar to a name that is already registered.

Why your name matters?

Your business name establishes your brand and identity. It is what customers will see and remember. Selecting a name is an important part of your business plan.

Make a good impression

Think about the businesses you encounter each day locally and nationally. Look at the trade names that fill advertisements and the logos that are instantly recognizable. The goal is to find a business name that leaves an impression. Be memorable.

A rose by any other name

Once you select a name, it will stick. How does it look on your sign, letterheads, social media and advertising? Be selective with color choices and fonts. Do they complement your brand and add to your message?

Check out the competition

Evaluate other brands in your industry. What are they called and what feelings does the name elicit? Does the name appeal to customers or does it detract from the service the business provides?

Business Questions? We Have Answers! Call Our Business Helpline 1-800-Jersey-7

Located within the New Jersey Department of State, the New Jersey Business Action Center is a business-first resource that can help you get answers from government agencies, direct you to appropriate officials or contacts, facilitate meetings and follow-ups with regulatory agencies and so much more, all at no cost and strictly confidential. Business support is one call away and we offer guidance in both English and Spanish.

“We are from State Government and we’re here to help all businesses grow!”



What type of business?

If your business is a sole proprietorship and you intend to do business under your own name, although trade name registration is not required, registration is strongly suggested. If you are a sole proprietorship or general partnership using a trade name, then you must register the trade name with the County Clerk's office in each county where your business operates. The county-level registration is compulsory for both domestic and foreign businesses.

Make it legal

Picking and registering a trade name, alternative name and dba name is a legal process. A sole proprietorship or general partnership will generally use a "trade name" (aka business name). A trade name is a name used to identify a business that is not the same as the business's full legal name.

Location matters

The registration protects your trade name from use by others within the counties where it is registered. To protect your trade name across New Jersey, you must register in all 21 counties.

Get registered

If your business is from out of state looking to operate in New Jersey and has a name already being used in the state by another business, you must adopt a "doing business as" (dba) name in the state. The dba name should be listed on your business registration form. Write your business's full legal name followed by dba and the intended name.

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