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choosing business domain names had a pretty easy job: name of business= nameofbusiness.com. This provided branding for the business and made the domain name easy for prospective visitors to remember. If a company's desired .com domain name was taken, the owner could register a .net, .biz, .info, or .us version.

## netFRONT

### Choose a domain name that works >

#### Executive Summary:

*A new column on using the Internet in your business. Picking the right domain name is increasingly important and there are ways to select the best one for your business.*

#### By Janeson Keeley

Before Web sites became as ubiquitous as business cards, the people in charge of

Then, in an attempt to improve their search engine rankings, some companies started using domain names that contained their targeted keywords, rather than using their business names. The idea was that search engines would consider keywords in domain names more relevant, and therefore give those sites a higher ranking than their competitors. Until recently, this practice was not particularly effective.

But something changed. On June 29, 2009, Microsoft officially announced its Bing search engine. On July 29, 2009, Microsoft and Yahoo! finalized a 10-year agreement whereby the Bing search engine would power Yahoo! search results, essentially merging the two. Bing and Yahoo!'s combined search engine share in June, 2009 was 28 percent.

Suddenly Bing became a much more important



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player than it had been when Microsoft search had only an 8.4 percent search share. Business owners began to check their rankings in Bing, and some found that those rankings were much lower than they had been in the old Microsoft search engine. Why? One major factor is that Bing places much more importance on keywords in domain names than the old Microsoft search engine did.

Now it is more important than ever for a new business owner to do keyword research and take SEO into account before she selects and registers its domain name. "A business' domain name is a critical part of its business strategy. It engages, transmits power, and positions your company in the search engines," says Roanoke marketing strategist Ira Kaufman of Entwine Inc., Beyond Integrated Marketing. "It's not just what sounds good. The choice of

domain name is a 'science' and has lasting consequences as part of your brand image."

Roanoke Realtor Kim Stone has experienced this firsthand: "My first Web site's domain name used my name. When I decided to develop a second Web site, I opted to use my targeted search terms in my domain name. My new Web site, [www.homesforsaleroanokeva.com](http://www.homesforsaleroanokeva.com), ranks much better for searches on those keywords than my first one does."

If your existing site is not ranking well in Bing, do not panic. If you make changes solely to improve your rankings in Bing, you run the risk of damaging your position in Google. Consult a search engine optimization specialist. Adjustments to your Web site can be made that will help your Bing rankings. A knowledgeable SEO professional will take all search engines into account and prevent you from making costly mistakes. 



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