

Business Name Search Checklist



Getting your corporate name cleared first time | Open Corporation For \$35

1. Build the name properly

- ☐ A distinctive element: a coined or unusual word, or a surname.
- ☐ A descriptive element: what the business actually does.
- ☐ A legal element: Inc., Ltd., Corp. or the French equivalent.
- ☐ Purely descriptive names are the most common cause of refusal.

2. Check the obvious conflicts yourself first

- ☐ Search the federal corporations database.
- ☐ Search your provincial business registry.
- ☐ Search the trademarks database at CIPO.
- ☐ Check whether the matching domain and social handles are free.

3. Know which search applies

- ☐ Federal filings require a NUANS® report.
- ☐ Ontario, Alberta, New Brunswick and PEI use NUANS.
- ☐ British Columbia runs its own name approval system.
- ☐ Quebec runs its own system through the provincial registry.

4. Understand what the report is

- ☐ It lists existing names similar to yours.
- ☐ It is not an approval; the registry decides when you file.
- ☐ It is not a trademark and gives no brand protection.
- ☐ Reports have a limited validity period, so file promptly.

5. Read the result properly

- ☐ Look for similar names in the same or related industries.
- ☐ A close match in an unrelated sector may still be acceptable.
- ☐ An identical or near-identical name will not clear.
- ☐ Ask a professional before filing if the result looks marginal.

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6. Consider the alternatives

- ☐ A numbered corporation needs no name search at all.
- ☐ You can register a trading name later once branding settles.
- ☐ This is usually cheaper if you are still deciding.
- ☐ The legal name can be changed later by articles of amendment.

7. If you will operate in several provinces

- ☐ A name free in one province may exist in another.
- ☐ Extra-provincial registration requires clearance in each one.
- ☐ Federal incorporation protects the name nationwide.
- ☐ Check every province you plan to trade in before committing.

8. Before you file

- ☐ Have a second-choice name ready in case the first is refused.
- ☐ Confirm the report is current and within its validity period.
- ☐ Make sure the name on the articles matches the report exactly.
- ☐ Consider a trademark application if the brand matters long term.

Want us to run the search?

Book a free consultation at gondaliyacpa.ca/consultation or email info@gondaliyacpa.ca