

# BUSINESS NAMES

Business Law Reform  
Private Sector  
Development Initiative

# Overview

- What business names are and how they're used
- When you need to register a business name
- How to register a business name
- Obligations on persons with business names

# What is a business name?

- Name other than your own used when carrying on a business

# Why use a business name?

- Differentiates business from competitors
- Easier for customers to remember
- Build brand awareness better than actual names alone
- Provides formal recognition by government – useful for grants, government contracts etc

## When you're using your own name

- **Individuals** – using your surname with or without your first name or initials
- **Firm or group**– when using surnames of all partners (with or without first names or initials) and company names of all corporate partners
- **Company** – when using the company name alone

# When you're using your own name ctd

Business Name NOT Required	Business Name Required
J. Harrington	Harrington Hardware
Nambawan Meats Ltd	Nambawan Meats Fine Butchers
Baker, Fa'oso and Lonsdale	Baker, Fa'oso and Lonsdale Accountants
Peter Manimu	Tanna Rest Haus

## When you're carrying on a business

- Any lawful form of trade, commerce, profession, or other activity carried on for profit or gain
- Does not include employees
- Does not include charitable trusts

# Names that can't be used

- Identical to names registered under the Companies Act or similar enough to deceive or mislead
- Identical to a business name registered in the past 5 years or similar enough to deceive or mislead
- Identical to a reserved name or similar enough to deceive or mislead



## Names that can't be used ctd

- Has connection with government or other public bodies
- Contains the word 'co-operative' or 'building society'
- Registrar decides the name cannot be used

# How to register a business name

- Online at [www.vfsc.vu](http://www.vfsc.vu)
- Via the Kiosk at VFSC Companies House
- Paper form
- Fees:
  - Reserving a name: VT 5,000
  - Registering a name: VT 10,000 – 12,000

# Using a business name

- Display certificate at place of business
- Put actual name on written documents associated with the business (e.g. invoices, receipts, demands for debts)
- Renew registration annually

# Renewing business name registration

- No longer required in September
- Must be done during 'anniversary period'
- Online or paper form
- Fee: VT 5,000