

Take Control of Your Domain: Get a Masking Policy, Secure a URL for Your Website



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Hey, everybody, it's Gene Marks. Thank you very much for joining me for this week's segment of "On the Mark", the weekly segment where we look at news and items that impact small businesses and how they impact you as well.

So, thank you for joining in. And you know what? Let's get right to the news, shall we? The first, which was announced this week, has to do with mask mandates, particularly in the state of New York. The state's governor announced an indoor mask mandate across the state, which is going to be in effect until February the 10th. She promises that it will be reviewed every two weeks, so it will decide whether or not to have further extensions after that.

Look, I've been doing a lot of traveling over the past few weeks. I was in Illinois, I was in Wisconsin, I was in Florida, I was in New England as well. It depends on the state that you're in, obviously where the mandates are in place. So, you know, depending on where your business is located, your state, sometimes even your city, might have its own mask mandate rules.

You know, my advice to you as a business owner, though, is this; Obviously, if you were in a state or a region where there is a mandate for people to wear masks, you should be doing that. That's obviously something that you should be doing.

But, I have to say that if I was running a business and I don't really care whether it's in the Midwest or down South or in the Northeast or out West, I would still be enforcing a mask mandate in my business, particularly if we're consumer facing. If I was running a restaurant, if I was running a retail store, any type of organization where consumers are coming in, I would be asking my employees to be wearing masks all the time.

If I was running a B2B business, I'd be enforcing a mask mandate, as well, among my employees. Maybe I'd be a little bit less stringent, saying, "Listen, when you're at your desk, you don't have to be wearing your mask, but when you're walking around, you should be wearing a mask."

Now, listen, I know, I know all of the arguments that are in place that do masks really work? And, cloth masks aren't really that effective and, you know, everybody should be wearing N95 masks. And I get all those rules.

The bottom line is that when people come into your business, you want them to feel safe. And when your employees are coming to work, you want them to feel safe. And frankly, if your prospective employees are looking, you're looking to recruit people into your business — and they take a look around — they want to feel safe. That's just what it is right now.

So, it's not a matter of politics. It's not a matter of you pontificating about the efficacy of masks or not. Yeah, it's a little bit of show business. It's a little bit of perception. I get that. But here we are in 2022, while there are states like New York that are still implementing mask mandates, I think regardless of where your business is, you should be doing and showing what you're doing, that you're operating a safe business both for your employees and the customers as well.

Now do you require customers coming in your stores to wear masks? That's not necessarily something you really have to be doing. I mean, but that's up to you. Again, the decision is up to you and how you want to be showing your customers and your employees how safe a business you are running.

So, New York state mask mandate for the next couple of weeks. Listen, I hope we talk to each other in a year from now and all these things are well behind us. And I do believe that they will be. But for now, to run a good business, I think you should be showing just how safe you are.

All right. Turning to other news, did you know that some people are thinking that they figured out the name for the Washington Football Team? You know, the Washington team was formerly known as the Redskins. There was a lot of controversy over that name, so they changed their name to the Washington Football Team a year or two ago. I forget actually.

They're going to unveil their new name this week, so maybe by the time you're listening to this, you actually know the new name. But, what's interesting is that a lot of people were getting some previews as to what those names could be, mainly because they were looking up on domain registration sites to see what domains the team, the Internet domains the teams was reserving because that would then correspond to what their names are.

Now, I'm not going to report to you what some of those potential names are. You can look it up. There's a story on CBS Sports about this, but the topic is interesting only because for you as a business owner, how about setting up your own domain? Did you know that if you go to whois.com, that's W-H-O-I-S.com, you can search who owns any domain that might be out there, including potential domains that you might want to have?

So, if you're curious to know who the owner is of a certain website, WHOIS will tell you that if you're looking for a new domain for your company. You can search for it there as well to see if it's available, if anybody owns it. So, something you want to definitely keep in mind.

The other thing that I want you to know is that if you are setting up a new domain for your website, so you're creating a new website and there are, by the way, great services out there, Wix is one of them — WIX — GoDaddy is another one. There are competitors to both of those platforms where they will not only set up your website for you, they will help you do a name search, they will help you get your website established to provide you tools for designing your web site.

So those services are really great, but you know, when it comes to choosing a name, you have to realize there are hundreds of domains that you might want to consider after your name. Like, for example, people are so you concerned with having their domain name be like a dot com domain name. Well, my domain name is a dot-net domain name. So, if you want to visit my site, it's not marksgroup.com, it's marksgroup.net.

Why did I use dot-net? Because when I set up my website, like over 20 years ago, somebody else had used marksgroup.com, so I chose the next best thing. I was concerned at the time saying, "Will people be able to find me on marksgroup.net?" That's not even a thing anymore. Like, people don't really care the dot, you know what.

We know dot-com. We know dot-gov. You know, we know dot whatever the country might be. But you know, depending on the type of your business, more and more small businesses are using more creative name extensions. They already have to be allowed, and there's a list of them you can find on GoDaddy's site.

Just to give you an example, like suppose you own an apartment complex and you're calling it, you know, Valley Apartments. Well, you could have a domain that says www.ValleyApartments. For example, you can have a domain name that ends with associates or attorney. Suppose you're like an individual attorney and you're just like, all right, my name is Susan James and I'm an attorney. You're going to have SusanJames.attorney as your website. If you're a mortgage broker, you can have the name of your agency dot-mortgage. If you live in Miami or your business is in Miami, you're going to have a domain name that ends in dot-Miami, as well.

There are a whole bunch of domain extensions that you could be having in your, you know, as part of your URL that people can go and visit, and it just gives more of an identity to your business. It gives more of a, you know, like a bit of a jazzy kind of thing.

So, don't think that, you know, just because you want to name your business, set up a website and the dot-com is taken. Don't think that you got a really you do any do anything about it. Use the name of your business, go to the list of domain name extensions and again, you can find a list on GoDaddy and or you can also just Google domain name extensions. Find one that's really kind of creative and connected to your business, like you're in the mortgage broker business or you're located in New York or you're an accountant, you're an attorney or restaurant.

You know that name that that entire website name might be more appealing, more better for your brand might attract more people. And you know, it can be, you know, email me gene@genes.restaurant, and that's what my domain name is, and my email will still reach me and my website will still be accessible and people can go to it, and it kind of makes you stand out a little bit.

So, the Washington Football Team, maybe by the time you're listening this, you know what their new name is. But, there are a lot of people out there that have a pretty good idea of what it is right now, as I'm recording this, because they looked up the name extension in the background.

Putting all that aside, you should come up with a good name extension for your business, have a good URL. And by the way, even if you want to create it and have it redirects to your existing site, that might be something to consider as well. That might be something I do. I'm an accountant. Maybe I'll establish a URL that's genemarks.accountant and when people go there, it redirects to my main site. But, I can use that

genemarks.accountant URL is a branding thing, and some of my materials are communicating with my customers.

So, that's the news for this week. Hey, listen, I appreciate you listening to "On the Mark" again. My name is Gene Marks. If you have got any advice, tips, if you'd like us to feature any guests on our Paychecks Thrive podcast, please feel free to reach out to me. If you go to payx.me/thrivetopics, you'll see a place where you can contribute, give your opinion, offer any suggestions for topics or guests as well. And let me tell you, we read those requests as well, and we will definitely act on them for you.

In the meantime, again, my name is Gene Marx. Thank you for listening to "On the Mark". We will see you again with some news impacting your business next week. Take care.

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