

Name Clearance Checklist.

Check a name before you get attached to it. A 20-minute check you run while changing the name still costs you nothing.

The three green lights

A working name isn't yours until all 3 lights are green. Run this the day you pick the name, not the day you print packaging.

CHECK ALL THREE

- ☐ **USPTO.** No live trademark that's the same or confusingly similar in your class. Dead marks don't count. Different goods usually don't either.
- ☐ **The .com.** Available, or a version you can live with (drinkyourname.com, yourname.co). A parked premium domain is a note, not a blocker.
- ☐ **The handles.** The 1 or 2 social platforms where your customer actually spends time. Not all of them.

The Name Knockout Prompt

Copy the whole prompt. Paste it into Claude or ChatGPT and fill in the [BRACKETED] fields before you send it. The AI finds the conflicts. It never gives the final answer. That part is yours.

You are my trademark paralegal. You are NOT my attorney and you do not give legal opinions. Your job is to find conflicts, not to clear me.

BRAND NAME: [NAME]

PRODUCT: [what you actually sell, in plain words]

LIKELY CLASSES: [e.g. Class 5 dietary supplements, Class 32 beverages]

Run a knockout search and return a table with these columns:

MARK | GOODS/SERVICES | OWNER | SERIAL # | STATUS (live/pending/dead) | CLASS |
SOURCE URL | RISK (red/yellow/green)

Search all of the following and report each separately:

1. USPTO: exact matches to [NAME], in ANY class. Flag class matches as higher risk.
2. USPTO: near-miss variants (drop/swap a letter, sound-alikes, translations).
NOTE: tell me how you believe the name is PRONOUNCED and show your reasoning, so I can catch you if you're wrong.
3. USPTO: marks that CONTAIN [NAME] as a word (e.g. "[NAME] LOA", "[NAME] CO").
4. LIVE MARKET: brands actually selling under this or a similar name: Google, Amazon, Instagram, TikTok. Unregistered names still create common-law rights.
5. DOMAIN: is the .com available, parked, for sale, or in use? What does it cost?
6. HANDLES: Instagram, TikTok, X, YouTube.

HARD RULES:

- Every single row must have a real SOURCE URL and, for USPTO rows, a SERIAL NUMBER. If you cannot produce both, do not include the row. Never guess a serial number.
- Do not tell me the name is "clear." Tell me what you found and what you could not find.
- End with: the 3 biggest risks, and the single question I should take to an attorney.

If any [BRACKETED] field above is still blank or in brackets, ask me for what's missing before you begin.

Check every result yourself

AI is great at finding possible conflicts and bad at judging them. It will invent believable-looking records, and it will flag conflicts that aren't real. Each check takes about 60 seconds.

HOW TO CHECK A RESULT

- 1 Copy the serial number from the row.
- 2 Go to tsdr.uspto.gov, paste the serial number and click Status.
- 3 **Read the status line.**
LIVE, DEAD or a pending code. That word decides everything.
- 4 **Open the Documents or Prosecution History tab.**
The event log shows what actually happened: filed, published, registered or abandoned.
- 5 **Searching by name instead?**
Use the official search at tmsearch.uspto.gov and confirm the AI's row matches the real record.

If a row has no serial number and no source link, don't chase it. Cut it and ask the AI to redo it.

What each status means

THE STATUS DECODER

STATUS	READ	WHAT YOU DO
Abandoned / dead	SAFE	Dead marks don't block you. Move on.
Pending	WATCH IT	Not examined yet. Note the serial number and check it again before you print packaging.
Registered, your class	STOP	Change the main word of the name, before you spend another dollar on it.
Registered, different goods	USUALLY FINE	Different goods, different class. Note it and keep going.

The add-a-word trap

ADDING A WORD DOESN'T FIX A CLASH

The most common beginner move when a name clashes is to add a word. It fixes nothing.

If "Mauna" clashes with something, "Mauna Hydration" doesn't create any distance. "Hydration" just describes the product, so the examiner makes you give up rights to that word, and then compares the main word anyway. Which is still Mauna.

Only changing the main word creates distance.

What this check can't do

THE HONEST LIMIT

- A knockout search gets you about 90% of the way in 20 minutes, for free. It does not make you safe.
- An examiner can still find a conflict you didn't.
- Brands already selling under a name they never registered can still come after you.
- The moment a few hundred dollars of attorney time is worth it: right before you print packaging. After that, a new name costs a print run.

