

2003 Business IDN Study – Europe

Study Description: Series of focus groups consisting of employees from midsize to large firms to understand how firms purchase and use domain names, and to test the appeal of Internationalized Domain Names.

Products in Study: *.com*, *.net*, IDN

Key Findings:

Ownership and Awareness
Product Perceptions

Other Useful Studies Involving Market Research in Europe:

2003 Business Market Study – Europe

2002 Consumer and Small Business Market Study – US/Europe

Ownership and Awareness

Participants describe their company Web Site as a “must-have” in the business world in order to be taken seriously. Since most of the participants work for specialized firms that require a personal selling relationship, most use the Web Site to communicate general information about the company and, with the exception of selling products, it is usually not used on a regular basis by customers or prospects.

Most of the firms represented did not have a formal process in place to promote their Web Site but instead use it as a referral from their sales and marketing divisions. Some respondents do use search engine placement and report moderate success.

Owning the right domain name is an integral part of marketing the Web Site because it is important that the domain name be “top of mind” to customers. The *.com* and *.se* (ccTLD for Sweden) are considered to be the most popular with *.com* more likely representing an international company and *.se* most likely representing a Swedish company.

- Companies generally own at least the two most common domain names (*.com* and *.se*). Those that own more tend to do so to protect their brand.

Purchasing domain names was reported as low-risk because it is easy to do, inexpensive and not necessarily a long-term commitment. All felt that matching the domain name to the web address and email made the address easier to remember.

In general, like advertising of domain name, these groups reported there was no formal process for deciding when or what domain name to purchase. Typically, they are bought on an as needed basis through period review by upper management and/or marketing. Web hotels were frequently mentioned as a channel for registering domain names.

Once a domain name was purchased, little need was seen for ongoing management. However, companies with multiple domain names did find value in centralizing the tracking of those in a single location.

How to Use these Results:

- Mention brand protection as a benefit of an IDN registration -- protection can be a large motivating factor in the purchase of additional domain names.
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Product Perceptions

Multilingual.com

- Respondents identified with being able to use Swedish characters in domain names. And the potential branding benefits were clear.
- Others saw it as the wave of the future:
 - Negative feedback was mostly centered on the fact that ML domain names are not universal and that most of the world has already adjusted to using standard ASCII characters in domain names.
 - Again, brand protection emerges as a key concern around the introduction of Swedish characters in domain names.
- Participants view IDNs as a supplement to traditional domain names. As such, pricing for IDNs is expected to be the same or less than other domain names.

How to Use these Results:

- Market IDNs as:
 - Marketing tool that enables a company to stay true to their brand.
 - The direction of the future/cutting edge.
 - Supplement your current domain name name with country-specific domain names.