



The Seattle Public Library

A library card could be your ticket to free market research!

Business Research Tools at the Seattle Public Library

www.spl.org/business/

The library can answer your questions

- Many different ways to ask questions:
 - In-person: Central Library - 7th floor Business, Science and Technology Desk
 - Phone: (206) 386-4636
 - Ask a Librarian: chat or email at www.spl.org/ask/

The library buys tools you can use

- Most electronic tools at www.spl.org >> ***“Articles and Research”*** >> ***“Business, Finance and & Fundraising”***
 - *Have library card number and PIN number ready. If not a Seattle resident, staff can check to see if you might qualify under a reciprocal agreement.*

Different kinds of information small businesses need

- Information about companies (as models, reliable clients/partners, or competitors)
- Statistics on markets, for product and service lines (average sales by business type, demographic information, etc.)
 - Market – Includes both the suppliers and purchasers (customers and sellers)
 - Industry – Group of companies that compete to provide products or services
- Guides and handbooks – various topics like startup, management, and marketing guides

Industry Classifications - SIC and NAICS codes – Industry classification systems set up by the Federal Government

Standard Industrial Classification (SIC)

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

<http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>

- Like standard and metric measurement, SIC was supposed to replace the NAICS (developed after NAFTA). The codes are reviewed every five years.
- Different tools use different codes
- Code can be an efficient search, but depending on the industry, some are more helpful than others
- Some companies have more than one code – they do more than one thing
 - Sometimes there is an option to search “primary” codes only



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Reference USA – information about companies and people

Company search to find listings by industry, geography, size, and other criteria

- Geography – metro area, radius, street address
- Business size - # of employees, sales volumes (**caution: sales volumes are calculated, not actual**)
- Other – executive ethnicity, gender, public/private, view corporate tree

Consumer / Lifestyles component to find information about potential (residential) customers

- Specific geography: city, state, county etc. or map based search
- If applicable, select, “home income” and/or “home value”
- “Lifestyle” criteria for various interest types
- Most “consumer snapshot” options are considered sensitive data (except ethnicity and # units)
Sensitive data selected - offers summary data and graphs, but won’t give individual listings
Select records and export to excel

DemographicsNow – demographic information about potential customers

- Specific geographies – type in a city name or an address (radius), select from the geography menu, or create custom geography on the map
- Population - current, past, and forecast
- Choose different demographic reports - use the “Help & Info” button in upper right under “data methodology” for descriptions of reports that can be selected in the “Demographics” tab.
- Mosaic USA - Mosaic is a consumer segmentation system that describes American consumers and the database can be searched for these (definitions and explanation under “Help & Info”).
- Company profiles – market sizing, locations, companies out of business since 2000
- Export to PDF, email

Business Insights: Global - information about large companies (private and public), industries, and articles

- Not as many companies as Reference USA, but often more detailed information
- Single search box will search across all categories – including journal articles, companies, industries, and brand name lookup
- Company histories, rankings, company financials, revenues, company history, market share, SWOT Graphs, export to PDF or email

ABI/Inform Trade & Industry– articles from trade publications and market research reports

- Search for articles published in trade and industry publications
- Includes First Research Industry Profiles – current information, great starting place on an industry



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Business Plans Handbook - Sample business plans

- Real-world examples of plans from a wide variety of manufacturing, retail, and service industries.

Standard Rate and Data Service (SRDS)

- Media, advertising and periodical publishers – Select the type of media on the left hand side, then drill down to find company listings in a specific geography.

General Onefile –articles published in general magazines and newspapers

- Not on the business database page, only because it is more general – any topic, not just business. Find this under “Databases A-Z”
- Articles from more general periodicals and some trade journals
- Subject Guide search, limit to full text, drill down by subdivision (forecasts and trends, industry forecasts, etc.)
Export by email, download, print

Statista – Research statistics, data, and related information for business. Includes information on industries, markets, consumer habits, and more (**our electronic subscription is “in-library” access only**)

Standard & Poor’s NetAdvantage– information written for the investor about public companies and industry reports (**our subscription makes the industry reports “in-library” access only**)

- Detailed company information
- Industry and sub-Industry reports
 - Might mention large players, forecasts, and important trends

Value Line – detailed public company information and concise industry reports

Morningstar - detailed public company information

Associations Unlimited – search for national and local trade associations (don’t overlook internet searching for these also)

Best Customers – profiles of people who typically buy a given type of product or service (print copy at Central Library – 7th floor)

- Some of this kind of data can be gleaned from the US Census, but this provides analysis and is easy to access and read



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Small Business Sourcebook – locate other resources about an industry (print copy at Central Library – 7th floor)

- Includes reference works, trade journals, industry associations, trade shows etc.

Local Business Publications – Articles about local news and trends

- Puget Sound Business Journal (print and in-library only electronic)
 - Articles
 - Book of Lists –yearly compilation of lists published in the Puget Sound Business Journal
- Daily Journal of commerce
 - Seattle’s journal of record

Business Ratio books - ratios of typical financial data for various industries. Compare financial situation of a company (or company plan) to others in the industry (print copies at Central Library – 7th floor)

- *RMA Annual Statement Studies (also available as an electronic database!)*
- *D&B Industry Norms and Key Business Ratios*
- *Almanac of Business and Industrial Financial Ratios*

US Economic Census – Sales/receipts by industry and geography

- May be the most accurate sales figures for an industry in a location
- Updated every 5 years
- Statistically protects information about individual companies
- Access through advanced search from American FactFinder
<http://factfinder2.census.gov/>

General Business Guidebooks - Wide variety of management guides, start-up guides, marketing guides, Nolo legal form books, HR guides (Dewey 658 and 340 – large sections, ask for help)

Examples (formats vary, could be in print, ebook, audiobook, etc.)

- *How to Write A Business Plan*, by Mike P. McKeever
- *Legal Guide for Starting & Running A Small Business*, by Fred Steingold
- Industry specific “*Start and Run a Pet Business*” by Heather Mueller

Have other questions? We are here to help, so just ask us!

In-person at SPL Central Library, 7th floor desk

Phone (206) 386-4636 “Ask a Librarian” email or chat form at www.spl.org/ask/

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