

Business Research Tools at the Public Library

www.spl.org/business/

<http://jbc.mypcls.org/start-a-small-business/>

The library can answer your questions

- Phone:
 - SPL: (206) 386-4636
 - PCLS: (253) 548-3300
- Ask a Librarian:
 - SPL: www.spl.org/ask/
<https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/business/make-a-business-appointment>
 - KCLS: <http://jbc.mypcls.org/contact-us/>

The library buys tools you can use

Have library card number and PIN number ready for online resources. If not a resident, staff can check to see if you might qualify under a reciprocal agreement.

- SPL: Most electronic tools at www.spl.org/business/
- KCLS: Small business and entrepreneurship resources (online, print, and in person) at <http://jbc.mypcls.org/>

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, NAICS was supposed to replace the SIC (developed after NAFTA). The codes are reviewed every five years.

Business Plans Handbook - Sample business plans (**SPL and PCLS**)

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

Mergent Intellect – Directories, Industry, demographics, Ratios (**PCLS**)

- Consumer data, demographics, industry
- First Research industry profiles

Reference USA – Company search to find listings by industry, geography, size, and other criteria (**SPL**)

- Geography – metro area, radius, street address
- Business size - # of employees, sales volumes (**caution: sales volumes are calculated, not actual!**)

DemographicsNow – demographic information about potential customers (**SPL and PCLS**)

- 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
- 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

Key Business Ratios – Access competitive benchmarking data, featuring 14 key business ratios in 800 lines of business. (**PCLS**)**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 (**SPL**)

- RMA Annual Statement Studies (**also available as an electronic database!**)
- Almanac of Business and Industrial Financial Ratios

Business Source Complete – Business videos, company profiles, market research reports and industry profiles. (**PCLS**)**Business Insights: Global** - information about large companies (private and public), industries, and articles (**SPL**)

- 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

ABI/Inform Trade & Industry– articles from trade publications and market research reports (**SPL**)

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

Lynda.com – Many online courses to help you build your business skills. Covers a range of topics – marketing to business ratios! (**SPL and PCLS**)**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.

Best Customers – profiles of people who typically buy a given type of product or service (**SPL print copy**)

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

Local Business Publications – Articles about local news and trends

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

US Economic Census – Sales/receipts by industry and geography (**on the open internet**)

- 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) (**SPL and PCLS**)

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!

SPL: (206) 386-4636

PCLS: (253) 548-3300

SPL: www.spl.org/ask/

<https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/business/make-a-business-appointment>

PCLS: <http://jbc.mypcls.org/contact-us/>