

## Business Research Tools at the Public Library

[www.spl.org/business/](http://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/](http://www.spl.org/ask/)  
<https://www.spl.org/programs-and-services/business/make-a-business-appointment>
  - PCLS: <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/](http://www.spl.org/business/)
- PCLS: Small business and entrepreneurship resources (online, print, and in person) at <http://jbc.mypcls.org/>

### Different kinds of information businesses need

- Information about other companies (clients, partners, or competitors)
- Information about customers (B2C) (demographics, lifestyles, consumer behavior, expenditures)
- Market trends (sales by business type, forecasts, industry norms)
- General handbooks and guides (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

**ReferenceUSA** – 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**)

**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/](http://www.spl.org/ask/)**

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

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