



## Researching a Company

### Books about Businesses

Search the [Library catalog](#), [SearchOhio](#), and [Ohiolink](#) for resources that you can request. [OverDrive](#) and [Hoopla](#) may be also resources to check.

Type the company's name and select subject from menu

- Gasser Chair Company
- Gasser
- Google Firm
- Enron

Add one of the following subjects to a company name for more specific information

Ford Motor Company--History

- Accounting
- Corrupt practices
- Case studies
- Employees
- Finance
- History
- Management

Locate books about business leaders or employees by selecting subject and typing: Last, first name

- Ford, Henry
- Jobs, Steve

Locate memoirs or books by business leaders by selecting author and typing: Last, first name

- Gates, Bill
- Sloan

### Analyst Reports/Annual Reports

Business Insights: Global

- Under Company Tab
- Find stock valuation reports, forecasts, risk assessments, financial snapshots, as well as company and earnings updates for publicly traded U.S. companies.

Business Source Premier

Mergent microfilm

Mergent Archives – Digitized Corporate Manual Collection

Morningstar Investment Center

Standard & Poor's Global Net Advantage

ValueLine

### Company Research

Amount of information available will depend upon these factors:

1. Business Entity- publicly traded, privately owned, or a subsidiary/branch?
  - a. Publicly traded companies- more information is available about publicly traded companies who trade their stock on the U.S. and other global stock exchanges or over the counter markets. They are required to file financial statement and other documents

with government organizations such as the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and other global regulators.

- b. Private companies- are not required to disclose any information.
  - c. Subsidiaries/branches usually do not report financial and operation details but refer to the parent company reports.
2. Location- Local government regulations and language will impact the amount of information that is available.
  3. Company clients, suppliers, competitors, and operating costs are a few examples of information that many companies considered proprietary secrets and rarely disclose.

Sources:

Companies in business or newly in business in US, also Canadian companies:

ReferenceUSA

[www.citydirectory.com](http://www.citydirectory.com) or [www.salesgenie.com](http://www.salesgenie.com) - Businesses and individuals (subscription required)

Very specific items (baby t-shirts wholesale) – [www.thomasnet.com](http://www.thomasnet.com), specialty print directories

Various directories of information

American Factfinder for general stats

America's Corporate Families (D & B)

Best Insurance –Property/Casualty

Best Insurance – Life/Health

Better Business Bureau- [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) – gives contact information sometimes not found elsewhere, executives

Blue Book

Business Insights: Global

Business Journal

Business Founding Date Directory

Business Source Premier

Candy Directory

Chamber of Commerce Directory

Corporate Statements

County Auditor/Recorder

D & B Business Rankings

D & B Consultants Directory

D & B Directory of Service Companies

DemographicsNOW

Direct Marketing Market Place

Directory of Foreign Firms Operating in the United States

Directory of United States exporters

Directory of United States importers

Encyclopedia of Consumer Brands

Filebound (when available to public)

Foundation Directory (Main Library-Information Services only)

Foreign Trade offices [export.gov](http://export.gov)

[Guidestar](#)

Harris Ohio/PA/NY

Headquarters USA

Insurance Almanac

International Directory of Company Histories  
Kroll Bond Ratings - LACE bank and S&L ratings – Database page in library only  
Local compilations, shoeboxes  
Local vertical files/ Corp index  
Mail Order Catalog directories  
Mail order directories  
Medical Device Register  
Mergent  
Mergent Intellect  
Mergent Archives – Digitized Corporate Manual Collection  
Million Dollar Directory  
Morningstar  
National Minority and Women Owned Business Directory  
Newspaper  
Ohio Financial Institutions Directory and Fact Book  
Ohio Secretary of State-Business Search  
Phonebook  
ReferenceUSA  
Regional Business News (EBSCO)  
Small Business Collection  
Small Business Source Book  
Standard & Poor's NetAdvantage  
Thomas Food Industry Register  
Thomasnet.com - [www.thomasnet.com](http://www.thomasnet.com)  
ValueLine  
Venture Capital and Private Equity Firms  
Vertical File (Local clippings from businesses and people from Youngstown Vindicator)

#### Tradenames/brands books and databases

Gale Directory Library includes:

- Brands and Their Companies (since 2010)
- Business Rankings Annual (since 2011)
- Encyclopedia of Associations: National Organizations of the United States (since 2010)
- Encyclopedia of Associations: Regional, State, and Local Organizations (since 2013)
- Encyclopedia of Business Information Sources (since 2010)
- Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media (since 2010)
- Market Share Reporter (since 2011)
- Tradeshows Worldwide (since 2013)

Advertising Red Book

Best's for insurance, CD or online

Brands and Companies (print and online)

Medical Device Register

D&B - Duns number (Data Universal Numbering System – 9 digits)

<http://www.dnb.com/>

ReferenceUSA

RN/WPL – number on tag of clothing items

BCRC

Business Source Premier

United States Patent and Trademark Office- [TESS search](#)

United States Patent and Trademark Office- [Patent Search](#), [Google Patent Search](#)

International

<http://www.infobel.com/en/world/>

Google

Google Books

Trade commissions, foreign chambers of commerce in US cities

Some paper directories in BIC

Telephone prefix locator

Better Business Bureau

Older or out of business:

Ohio SOS site – active, agent name

S&P directories in paper form (Financial, Industrial, Railroad)

Moody's on microfiche

Obsolete Securities

Company websites

[Columbia Historical Corporate Reports](#)

Mergent Archives – Digitized Corporate Manual Collection

FIRNA Brokercheck (select firm option)

Gale Virtual Library Reference

Acronyms, Initializes & Abbreviations Dictionary – (since 2010)

Business Plan Handbook (since 1993)

Encyclopedia of American Industries (2005)

Encyclopedia of Emerging Industries – print and virtual 2011 edition

Encyclopedia of Global Brands (2013)

Encyclopedia of Global Industries (since 2007)

Local Help

Vetbizohio.org, [www.va.gov/osdbu](http://www.va.gov/osdbu)

HUBZone [www.sba.gov/hubzone](http://www.sba.gov/hubzone)

Procurement Technical Assistance Center @ MVEDC

SCORE Youngstown

## Financial Filings & Disclosure Forms

To understand a business and its current condition, there are legal and financial disclosure documents that may help you better understand from government agencies or regulatory organizations. In the United States

U.S. SEC EDGAR ([Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis, and Retrieval System](#)) ; 1996 - present

- Required regulatory filings of U.S. domestic public company and foreign private issuers offering securities on U.S. exchanges from 1996 to the present
- Review company filed registration statements, prospectuses, proxy statements and other periodic reports such as the annual 10-K, the quarterly 10-Q and the 20-F for foreign issuers.
- Find out about a company's strategic goals, expansion plans, financial performance, significant litigation and other major developments
- For optimal use, review [Researching Public Companies through EDGAR: A Guide for Investors](#)

## Ohio Secretary of State- Business filings

- Access to available business filings varies by state
- Use to verify if a company is registered to do business in a state or review incorporation records
- Filings might provide additional information about a private company

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) requires that all franchises provide a Franchise Disclosure Document (FDD) so that the prospective franchisees understand the investment risks and obligations. A few large franchises are exempt from filing.

This [FTC Franchise Rule](#) (16 CFR Parts 436 and 437) requires the FDD to contain 23 specific items of information about the offered franchise, its officers, and other franchisees. Required disclosure topics include:

- franchise's litigation history, past and current franchisees and their contact information
- any exclusive territory that comes with the franchise
- assistance the franchiser provides franchisees
- cost of purchasing and starting up a franchise
- financial statements if the franchiser makes representations about the financial performance of franchise

For a summation, see Entrepreneur Magazine's article on [how to read a financial disclosure statement](#).

[Canadian Securities Administrators – SEDAR](#) ; 1997 to present

- SEDAR is the System for Electronic Document Analysis and Retrieval, the electronic filing system for the disclosure documents of public companies and investment funds across Canada.
- For more information, see [SEDAR FAQs](#) and the [list of the types of documents filed](#)

## Litigation/Law Suits

Google Scholar

<http://scholar.google.com/>

Coverage:

- Published opinions of U.S. state appellate and Supreme Court cases since 1950
- U.S. federal district, appellate, tax and bankruptcy court cases since 1923
- U.S. Supreme Court cases since 1791

Search strategy:

- Check Case Law; Select Courts
- Search for party name

Additional information:

Minick, Courtney and David Tsai. Google Scholar: A New Way to Search for Cases and Related Legal Publications. *LLRX*.

### **PACER: Public Access to Court Electronic Records**

- Use to find out if a company has any pending law suits.
- Operated by the U.S. Administrative Courts, PACER includes case and docket information for all U.S. district, bankruptcy, and appellate courts.
- Registration and payment are required to use this service. For additional information, see the [PACER FAQs](#)

After U.S. Congress passes legislation, U.S. federal agencies are responsible for creating rules which administer and enforce the laws. Many agencies investigate complaints of business violations and publish their enforcement actions providing valuable insight into an entity's values and culture. For a more comprehensive list of agencies with enforcement responsibilities, see the [Dirt Diggers Digest](#). Below are a few examples of agencies reporting their enforcement results. Check if a company has had any recent disciplinary action.

### **Securities Class Action Clearinghouse. Stanford Law School in cooperation with Cornerstone Research**

- Provides detailed information relating to the prosecution, defense, and settlement of federal class action securities fraud litigation
- Also contains copies of more than 42,825 complaints, briefs, filings, and other litigation-related materials filed in these cases

### **U.S. SEC Litigation**

- Provides information on SEC enforcement actions, opinions issued by the Commission, briefs filed by SEC staff, trading suspensions, and notices concerning the creation of investors' claims funds in specific cases

### **U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission**

- CFTC disciplinary history available here includes Reparations Sanctions in Effect and Administrative Sanctions in Effect
- Search CFTC disciplinary history by respondent name, other names used by respondent, CFTC docket number, or National Futures Association ID.

### **Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System: Search facility**

The Federal Reserve supervises the following entities and has the statutory authority to take formal enforcement actions against them:

- State member banks
- Bank holding companies
- Nonbank subsidiaries of bank holding companies
- Edge and agreement corporations
- Branches and agencies of foreign banking organizations operating in the United States and their parent banks
- Officers, directors, employees, and certain other categories of individuals associated with the above banks, companies, and organizations (referred to as "institution-affiliated parties")

For additional information, see the [U.S. Federal Reserve explanation about enforcement responsibilities](#)

### **U.S. Department of Treasury. Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.**

The OCC supervises the following entities and has the statutory authority to take enforcement actions against them:

- National banks and their subsidiaries

- Federally chartered savings associations and their subsidiaries
- Federal branches and agencies of foreign banks
- Institution-affiliated parties (IAPs), including:
  - a. Officers, directors, and employees
- A bank's controlling stockholders, agents, and certain other individuals.

#### Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

- State chartered banks that are not members of the Federal Reserve System and insured branches of foreign banks

#### U.S. Federal Trade Commission

- Review cases and proceedings regarding company mergers and anti-competitive practices.

#### U.S. Environment Protection Agency

- Investigate the company's environmental record. Since company facilities have different names, best to search by U.S. address and postal codes.

#### U.S. Department of Labor Enforcement Data

- Look up company and retrieve enforcement results from U.S. Wage and Hour Division (WHD), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Mine Safety & Health Administration (MSHA)

#### U.S. Equal Opportunity Employment Commission

- EEOC cases against employers might be available in the collection of briefs filed by the EEOC in the United States Courts of Appeals in cases in which the EEOC is a party and in the EEOC amicus briefs filed in the U.S. Courts of Appeals, district courts, and state courts

### Patents

Patents offer insight into a company's

- innovative culture
- business opportunities
- research and development direction
- market expansion plans. Number of foreign filings might indicate the patent's importance and identify a company's target markets.

Tips for locating company patents

- The owner of the patent, an individual or entity, will be listed in the assignee or applicant field.
- Companies or employers are not always the assignees. Rights can be held by third parties
- University patents are sometimes filed under their governing board, i.e. Board of Regents
- Company names are not uniform, so search for all variations
- Examine the patent's abstract, specifications, and claims for information about the invention

The Akron Public Library is our local Patent and Trademark Depository. They offer two classes about the basics of the patent process. [One class explains the differences between copyrights, trademarks, and patents.](#) [The other class explains the patent search process.](#) There is also a [booklet about trademark information](#). Here are some other [tutorial resource about patents](#).

### Visual Details from Companies

Search strategies:

- Check both [Google Videos](#) and [Bing Video](#) for videos not included in [YouTube](#)
- Search for videos in a specific domain
  - Access [http://www.google.com/advanced\\_search](http://www.google.com/advanced_search)
  - In **All Words**, type: CEO interview company name

- In **Site or Domain**, enter a URL addresses such as: .youtube.com; pbs.org; bbc.co.uk ; .bloomberg.com
- Use [Google Images](#) and [Bing Images](#) to locate pictures of company products, flowcharts, and other graphics. For images from an unknown source, use the reverse image engine [TinEye](#)