Using Local Small Business Research Resources
– (Online and Library-print and online)

OBJECTIVE:
1. Identify research resources for small businesses
2. Provide an overview on each resource
3. Intended audience is users in Greater CVG, NKY and SE Indiana areas.

IMPORTANT POINTS IN USING RESEARCH RESOURCES
1. 90% of the information you need is NOT available to Google searches (it is subscription based resources to which the library is a member.)
2. Bigger libraries are not necessarily better (many smaller ones may either subscribe to different databases and/or belong to a consortium of smaller libraries that have access to large databases of information.)
3. You will always need a library’s member card to use your home PC for any library’s online resources.
4. Some important online resources are ONLY available when you use that individual library’s local computers (subscription restrictions).
5. You may not need a membership to use online resources if on local library’s computer – but check at the information desk.
6. Often if the library has the same information in print and online, you will want to use the online as it will always be more current and usually more extensive.
7. A good reason to minimally physically visit the library is that you will either see information in the business section that you have not thought about or there will be printed information (books, magazines, research reports) that is simply not online and you get to visit face-to-face with a business research librarian.

FIRST STEPS IN FINDING RESEARCH ANSWERS
1. Go to the library of your choice and ask to visit with the “business reference librarian” (as each library varies from the others a great deal in both what print and online resources are available, it is not reasonable to cover that in this brief).
2. Tell them what you want to research, example: your competition, find sample business plans like yours, research the market you compete in or financing your business.
3. They will both introduce you to the print and online resources for you and tell you when they give classes [or online tutorials] how to use the online resource [they are a bit complicated so take the classes and save time].
4. As each library has a significantly different web presentation of material, ask for an orientation to using their specific web site to access business research.
5. Ask for a printed list of the business research resources available at that library [they will differ] as your research focus will change as your business changes/develops.
6. Do not be hesitant to go to another library as they all vary in the subscriptions that they buy and the “consortiums” of similar libraries that they share information with…..so there is not one grand library that has it all.
MAJOR LOCAL LIBRARIES AND ONLINE RESOURCES
Libraries/resources tend to serve some geographical point (city, county, national etc.)

1. Aurora Public Library (Aurora, IN)  http://www.aurorapubliclibrary.org/
2. Boone County (KY)  https://www.bcpl.org/
3. Campbell County (KY)  https://www.cc-pl.org/
4. Hamilton County Public Library + branches (Hamilton Co)  http://www.cincinnatilibrary.org/
5. Kenton County (KY)  https://www.kentonlibrary.org/
6. Lawrenceburg Public Library (Lawrenceburg, IN)  https://www.lpdl.lib.in.us/
7. Mason Public Library (Mason OH) (member of Ohio Digital Library network)  http://masonpl.org/
8. MidPoint Public Library (West Chester-Middletown area, OH)  https://www.midpointlibrary.org/
10. University of Cincinnati Library, Cincinnati, OH  https://www.libraries.uc.edu/

As well as:
1. SCORE – Greater Cincinnati:  https://greatercincinnati.score.org/
   a. Free, has 100+ 3-page briefs on simple business topics directed to small business owners
   b. Use the Resource Library Tab and download what you need.
   c. Ask your SCORE counselor for assistance using them.
2. SCORE – National  www.score.org
   a. Free, has tons of videos, short written briefs and blogs on topics of interest to small business owners.

MAJOR RESEARCH DATABASES [AND USES]
A sample of the kinds of databases/information available through [some but not all] libraries that you could not access with Google:

1. Reference USA [ online phone/address directory of 50+ million businesses – use to create customer lists and research competition]
2. Business Source Premier [ research industry trends and products]
3. Universal Class – access to 500 online courses in business, entrepreneurship, web development and more.
4. Foundation Directory Online Professional – list of foundations searchable by to whom they give money or what causes.
5. Gale Virtual Reference Library – probably the single most important resource for a small business as it has downloadable samples of actual business plans so you can see what it took others to run a business [marketing, sales, costs, etc.]. If possible look at the older printed versions in the library to get an idea of what you will obtain online to which you would have access as a member.
6. ProQuest – a dataset of full text magazine/journal articles and analytic reports on select industries.

COMMENTS:
- Brief 1.04 replaces prior briefs numbered: 1.04, 3.16, 3.10 ( The revision Brief 1.04 moved from telling you how to do research to telling you where and who to ask for assistance in starting your research due to the very wide difference in resources and how they provide information to the user)
If you would like to request a Cincinnati SCORE counselor please [click here].

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