

WISE WORDS

"The next best thing to knowing something is knowing where to find it." This saying is attributed to the 18th century British author Samuel Johnson. He is saying that it is OK to know a little bit about a lot of things, as long as you know where to find the rest of the information if you need it.

COMPETITIVE INFORMATION

Keeping Don Corleone in mind, learn more about your competitors. If they are public companies you can access (with a little digging) financial results reported to shareholders that include sales and profit reports.

If it is a privately-held company, many documents are a matter of public record, such as Articles of Incorporation and annual filings with the registrar of companies which they are required to file. This may be either a provincial or federal registry.

You can also employ services such as Zapdata to look up company reports. These will give you a consolidated listing of all known data and can include things such as number of employees, annual sales and territories covered.

A final, sometimes too easy, way to find information is to do a web search. Type in your own name to see what others can find out about you. Many companies now scan FaceBook or MySpace for information about potential applicants.

References

Performance Indicators:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_performance_management#Metrics_.2F_Key_Performance_Indicators

Credit Reports:

www.econsumer.equifax.ca

www.transunion.ca

www.creditbureau.ca

Comprehensive Energy Use Database:

oeenrcan.gc.ca/corporate/statistics/neud/dpa/trends_res_ca.cfm

Canada Border Services Agency:

www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/sima

ZapData:

www.zapdata.com

We live in an age where information flows across so many planes that it is difficult to keep anything secret unless you are the only one who knows it. Some things never change.

■ *During the course of his 25-year career in the mechanical industry Mark Evans has worked on the wholesale and manufacturer side in sales and market-*

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