

## Public Libraries Briefcase

### Pikes Peak Library District Colorado Springs, Colorado

A topic of interest today in the public library is helping people who want to start their own business or expand the one they currently own. Most people in this situation need to write a business plan to submit to investors or banks to obtain the money necessary for their dreams. A few write a business plan to use as a roadmap of where they want to go. These second ones can be written more in an outline format. All business plans need to address the following topics in depth: the business, products, financial details, marketing and advertising and management. A good outline of a business plan can be found at the Small Business Administration webpage (<https://www.sba.gov/writing-business-plan>). The best guide for most people is *the Business Plans Handbook*. This book contains actual business plans for many different types of businesses. As of February 2015 there are 32 volumes. This book is often used as a starting point when helping someone decide how to write a business plan for their business. They are also available from Gale as E-Books.

The first step in writing a plan is to get a sample you can use as the basis for your own. The best source is *Business Plans Handbook*. The next step is identifying the industry's SIC or NAICS codes. These are available in print in the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual* or the *North American Industry Classification System, United States*.

Poor's *Industry Surveys* does, but it is not as current or as comprehensive. Another source for industry outlook is the many magazine and newspaper indexes available. These provide very timely information on some very specialized industries. I use Ebsco's *All-in-one Search* or Gale's *InfoTrac General OneFile*. The *All-in-one Search* allows a patron to search five business related databases including *Business Source Premiere*, *Green File*, *MasterFile Premiere*, *Newspaper Source* and *Regional Business News*. Databases covered under this heading may vary depending on your subscriptions to Ebsco's magazine indexes. *InfoTrac General OneFile* covers more trade journals as well as a more global magazines and newspapers. Using both of these sources you can access more than 12,000 magazines and newspapers around the world.

After you have found information on the industry outlook the next step is identifying competitors and vendors for your business. There are many local directories that list the businesses that operate in your area as well as nationally, such as *Dun and Bradstreet's Million Dollar Directory* and *Ward's Business Directory of U. S. Private and Public Companies* and internationally, such as *Hoovers Online*. These can be used to find information such as how much money is being made, number of employees, how long in business and much more. This can be very useful for someone who thinks he can make 10 million dollars and finds that of the ten U.