



Internet Resources for Small Business

Free or Low-Cost Tools

Business Tools and Templates—SCORE.org/resources has everything from business plan templates and cash flow projections to customer service tips and how to use Pinterest.com!

Microsoft offers many templates of schedules, brochures, budgets, business cards, databases and presentations that work with Microsoft Office Programs at Office.com/templates.

At Entrepreneur.com/formnet you can get instant access to hundreds of business forms, templates, and contracts online today. Find documents for almost every kind of business such as purchase orders, partnership agreements, loan agreements, applications, and bill of sale. You can also browse our list by popular categories such as marketing, legal, finance, real estate, and more with Formnet from Entrepreneur.

At bplans.com/business_calculators/ you can see the effect of increasing your inventory or collecting your accounts receivable has on cash flow, compute break even or estimate start up costs, or the cost-effectiveness of an e-mail marketing campaign.

Images—Remember most images on the web are copyrighted. But, some images are free to use:

- FreeDigitalPhotos.net - offers small photos suitable for use on a web page for free, other sizes range from \$3-\$10.
- stock.xchng™vi (www.sxc.hu/home) offers free photos in all sizes, and free tutorials on how to get different photo effects.
- Kozzi.com has over 50,000 free images, plus additional photos and clipart at a reasonable place. Photos may be used for personal or business use, but cannot be sold or transferred. You do need to credit the author on pictures used online for this site.
- Office.com/images has free clipart, photos and animations.

Market Research—

Small business owners need to know how their business stacks up with the competition in order to succeed. **SizeUp** will help you manage and grow your business by benchmarking it against competitors, mapping your customers, competitors and suppliers, and locating the best places to advertise. The SBA secured a license available at "SBA.gov/sizeup," so you can use it for free through 2013.

The following can be accessed with a library card:

- ReferenceUSA.com is a great demographic tool to find out what your customer base is, where your competitors are, and how to reach your customers.
- **Business Insights: Essentials** has company profiles, rankings and brand information.
- **Proquest** and **Infotrac Onefile** give you access to thousands of magazines, trade journals and publications and newspapers.

These 3 databases alone cost over \$18,000, but you can use them at no cost. Not sure how to use them? [Contact your business reference librarian](#)—for guidance on how to do research.

For the latest information and trends on your industry, check out SmartBrief.com. It offers ezines on over 100 industries as well as one on Social Media.

[The U.S. Census Bureau \(census.gov\)](http://The U.S. Census Bureau (census.gov)) enables you to classify your business using a NAICS Code (necessary for filing taxes and doing work for the government.) It also provides demographic information on the population and other businesses, including sales, number of employees, and average income in a specific business.

The [U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](http://U.S. Small Business Administration (sba.gov)) website has resources for starting, running, or financing your business, disaster or contracting assistance, and locating a mentor or training.

By Coralie Myers, SCORE

Go to ScoreSpokane.org/Resources to access the digital version of this guide, and link directly to all the resources shown!

