



Mastering Technical Sales: Skill Sheet

Where To Find Financial Information

Selling into a down economy means that adequate preparation and research are even more important when selling your value proposition to customer executives. Understanding your customer's key business issues and the financial metrics behind them can mean the difference between winning and losing your next sale.

- **Annual Shareholder Report:** The primary document produced by public corporations to disclose corporate information to their shareholders. A valuable source of insight which includes financial data, market segment info, risks, new product information, litigation and the Letter To Shareholders. You can also get the Income Statement and Balance Sheet in the Annual Report.
- **The Proxy Statement (DEF14A):** Produced prior to the annual shareholders meeting. Pay particular attention to the Report of the Compensation Committee - how are executive bonuses calculated; and Board of Directors Listing - where do they come from?
- **Forms 10K and 10Q.** Annual and quarterly sources of more detail, in particular Item 1 - Business Overview and Item 7(a) - Management Discussion and Analysis. Management is required to discuss what went right last year, what didn't, and why. Foreign companies may file a 20F instead which contains most of the same information. The 10Q will provide quarterly income and balance reports so you can compare trends.
- **Analyst Reports.** Most publicly traded companies are followed by financial analysts who often generate their own predictive models for income and profit. The analysts also apply a less "marketing-spun" viewpoint on the company's activities and plans.
- **Management Presentations.** The "Investors" section on a corporate website frequently houses presentations given by management on an analyst day and provide additional color commentary on goals and objectives.

Spending an hour researching your customer can help you target exactly how you will help them increase profitable revenue, decrease expenses or mitigate risk - all tied into their publically stated corporate objectives. A great investment of your own!