

Strategic Campaigns in Canada

A USW Research Guide



USW Canadian National Office
Education & Strategic Campaigns
Department

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
CONCEPTUALIZING THE CAMPAIGN	3
Mobilization.....	3
Member Interviews	4
Strategic Research and Analysis.....	4
STRATEGIC RESEARCH.....	5
A Note on Sources	5
Keeping Records.....	6
COMPANY BACKGROUND	7
Basic Information.....	7
Public Sector Employers.....	7
Company History	7
PROFIT CENTRES	9
Product and Services.....	9
Transportation/Distribution of Products and Services.....	9
A note on NAICS/SIC codes	9
Business Segments.....	9
Facilities.....	10
Workforce	11
Industry Overview	11
Customers	11
Suppliers	12
Putting it All Together	12
Operations	12
Rivalry Among Existing Competitors	13
Bargaining Power of Suppliers	13
Threat of New Entrants	14
Threat of Substitute Products.....	14
Bargaining Power of Buyers	14
Financial Analysis.....	14
Segment Analysis.....	14
KEY DECISION MAKERS	15
Management.....	15
Top Management	15
Directors.....	16
Major Shareholders.....	16
Lenders.....	16
LONG-TERM STRATEGY	17
Business Strategy	17
Outside Stakeholders	17

Stakeholder Analysis	18
CORPORATE LANDSCAPE	20
Legal	20
Regulatory	20
Civil Society.....	22
Global Solidarity & USW Alliances.....	22
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	23
All-in-One Sources	23
Income Statement.....	23
Description	23
Revenues, Expenses, and Profit	24
Example	26
Balance Sheet.....	27
Description	27
Assets, Liabilities, and Equity	27
Example	29
Statement of Cash Flows	30
Description	30
Three Elements of the Statement of Cash Flows	30
Free Cash Flow	31
Example	32
KNOW YOUR SOURCES.....	33
Company Website	33
Public Companies	34
Canadian Companies - SEDAR	34
US Companies - EDGAR	34
Private Companies	35
Federal or Provincial Corporate Filings.....	35
Real Estate Records	36
Secured Creditors.....	36
Non-Profit Organizations.....	37
Company Information Databases.....	37
Free Directories.....	38
Subscription-based (or for fee) Directories.....	39
Newspapers and Archives.....	40
Activist News and Research Sources.....	41
Industry Specific:	42
Industry Resources.....	42
Industry Canada	42
Industry Publications	42
Other Industry Sources	43
Canadian Certifications and Collective Agreements	44
Legal, Regulatory and Community Resources	45
Legal	45

Bankruptcy and Insolvency and CCAA Records.....	45
Regulatory (Environmental)	46
Community/Political/Labour	46
Global Union Federations	47
SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES FOR THE CAMPAIGN	48
LinkedIn	48
Facebook	48
Twitter	48
Blogging.....	49
Forums	49
YouTube	49
Flickr	50
APPENDIX A - BUILDING POWER	51
APPENDIX B – TALKING TO WORKERS	55
APPENDIX C: Strategic Corporate Research Chart	58

INTRODUCTION

It is becoming more difficult to protect the wages, benefits and working conditions of USW members in Canada through work stoppages alone. Employers are getting larger and more powerful, have an enhanced ability to withstand work stoppages, and are becoming more aggressive. While some may point to a decline in strikes in Canada as an indication that labour relations have become more stable, others point out that the decline in strikes may be attributed to a realization that unions are less likely to strike because the employers have the upper hand and a strike may not be effective.

At the same time, employers are aggressively using lockouts to force workers to accept unjust demands. In a lockout or strike, especially when scabs are used, developing a strategic campaign may be essential to defend workers and support the union.

Employer use of anti-union law firms and replacement workers, and anti-worker actions by federal and provincial governments are creating a fundamental inequality in traditional labour relations and give employers more power. Globalization has meant that employers are diversified and can rely on revenue generated from other resources outside Canada when a labour dispute occurs.

One key to correct this imbalance starts with information. With information, we can better understand what we are up against and develop strategic campaigns to leverage our power against employers on a more equal level. Research involves the collection, analysis and dissemination of information. It allows us to develop strategic campaigns that identify an employer's strengths and weaknesses while assessing our own bargaining power and our ability to confront an employer. Strategic campaigns can be ramped up before a strike or lockout occurs, but are most often utilized after the union or the employer has taken action. However, preparation before a strike or lockout is critical.

When developing a strategic campaign, the union needs to know how the employer is structured, how it makes decisions, and how it makes its profits.

Smaller companies may appear to present a simple and clear situation. But they also may be privately owned, and make very little information publicly available. Conversely, the situation may seem overwhelming when dealing with large corporations with complex business models involving multiple product lines sold on an open market, hundreds of locations, thousands of shareholders, and often several distinct businesses or divisions under the umbrella corporation. In those cases, the abundance of information publicly available can also make strategy development more challenging.

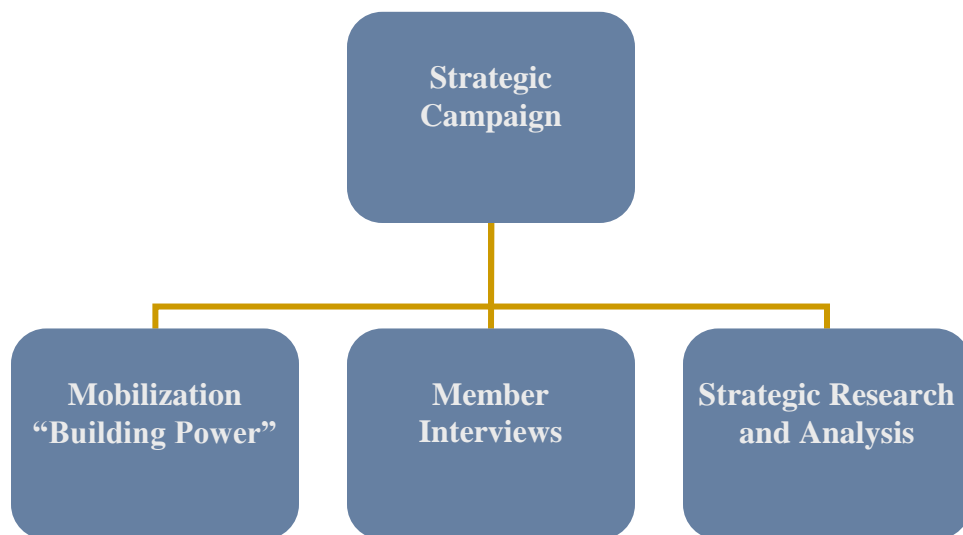
This guide will get you started in thinking about an employer's source of profits, the relationships an employer depends on, how to develop a strategic campaign, and most

importantly where to find the necessary information that can improve your bargaining position.

While strategy is developed based on research, workers themselves are critical sources of information and their input is an essential part of the research process. In addition, workers and union members should be charged with carrying out much of the plan. Finally, preparing for a labour dispute and leveraging the employer before a strike or lockout occurs is the best way to prevent them. Appendix A and B contain information on how to mobilize workers and build power within a bargaining unit and how to obtain information inside the bargaining unit.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE CAMPAIGN

When starting research on a company, it is important to conceptualize how we will use the research in a strategic campaign. There are three main elements of a strategic campaign, as illustrated in the chart below: (1) Mobilization, (2) Member interviews; and (3) Research and Analysis.



Mobilization

The first element, and one of the most important ones, is to mobilize and prepare members to be internally organized to ensure that any campaign is driven by the solidarity of union members.

The best tool we have to mobilize members is the USW Building Power Program. The program is summarized in [Appendix A](#) to this research guide to stress that workers must be central movers and shakers of the strategic campaign. The Building Power Program not only organizes the union internally, it begins the process of getting the workers involved in creating and implementing elements of the strategic campaign from the start. Workers can engage in the collection, analysis and dissemination of information which makes up the research process.

Member Interviews

The second element requires in-depth interviews with union members. Union members have years invested with an employer and generally have a wealth of information about company officials, suppliers, customers, regulatory matters, etc. Union members often know where “skeletons” are buried that can be used in campaigns. [Appendix B](#) provides an interview guide to obtain information from union members.

Strategic Research and Analysis

The third element, to which this guide is largely devoted, is the in-depth strategic research and analysis that allows us to better understand the employer and its vulnerabilities, and to develop the strategy and tactics that can be employed to correct the imbalance in power between the employer and the workers.

Let’s get started!

STRATEGIC RESEARCH

Five main aspects of a target company should be thoroughly researched to understand the internal and external dynamics of an employer, as summarized in the chart below.

Company Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All the basic information about a company (public vs. private, legal name, address, website, parent vs. subsidiary) is useful, as is the company's history.
Profit Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does the company actually do or produce?• Where is the company making/losing money?• How is the business set up? (Operations)
Key Decision Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In addition to top management and the board of directors, key decision-makers could include major shareholders, banks and others. Know who they are and something about them.
Long-Term Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the company's plans for the future?• Where and how does it intend to grow its business?
Corporate Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the company subject to particular laws and regulations (environmental, food safety, etc.)?• What is the image of the company in the community?

In the sections that follow, you will find resources to help you gather information on these main aspects of the employer and devise a strategic campaign.

A Note on Sources

At the end of each section, you will find a **box** referring to useful sources for locating information on the particular topic. If you are using an electronic version of this guide, you can click on the source to find more information on that source and links to access it. If you are using a paper version, you can refer to the appropriate page in the “**Know Your Sources**” section of the guide where you will find the links to those sources on the web.

Note also that most but not all of the sources listed are found online. There are times when the best way to obtain information you need is by talking to workers or visiting a government agency, court, or even your local library. While a lot of recommended resources are free sites on the web, this guide also refers to certain valuable information that can be found only on pay websites and subscription services such as Lexis/Nexis.

For fee-based searches, and to obtain an electronic version of the guide, please contact the CNO at 416-487-1571 or aeshelman@usw.ca for assistance and we will be pleased to help.

Keeping Records

Finally, as you go along in your research, keep track of where you find information. This will help you keep records of the most up-to-date and accurate information. Additionally, it will protect you from any slander or libel accusations that may be related to your research.

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Basic Information

In starting your research, you will need answers to some basic questions:

- Is the employer in the public sector or private sector?
- If in the private sector, is the company for-profit or not-for-profit?
- If for-profit, is the company privately held or publicly traded?
- If publicly traded, what is its ticker symbol? (very useful for shorthand searching), and which exchange(s) does it trade on? (TSX, NYSE, NASDAQ, AMEX, other?)

Compile all the basic information on your employer: complete legal name, address, website, phone number, and fax number. If it is a subsidiary of a larger corporation, provide the same information for that corporation as well.

Most companies have a website, and public companies generally have an “investor relations” portion.

Sources: Company website (p. 37), AIF (p. 38), MD&A (p. 38), 10-K (p. 39), 20-F (p. 39), provincial or federal corporate filings (p. 39), fee-based sites (p. 43)

Public Sector Employers

Note that this guide is largely devoted to for-profit, private sector employers, but the research framework presented is generally applicable to any employer. Keep in mind that public sector employers, as arms or agencies of the government, have different obligations than corporations and may be subject to specific legislation. For more information on specific public sector employers, please contact the CNO for assistance.

Company History

Provide a brief history of the company. This should include where, when and how it was started, and any recent or major mergers or acquisitions. While this information can usually be found on the company’s website, this should be supplemented with other sources.

Recent historical data on the company will often be most valuable. To do this, start by looking through (online) newspaper articles.

Additionally, check if the USW or another union has a history of running coordinated campaigns against this employer. It is important to know which tactics worked in the past in addition to those that did not. Speak to anyone in the organization who may have some knowledge of the company.

Sources: [Company website](#) (p. 37), [AIF](#) (p. 38), [Annual Report](#) (p. 38), [10-K](#) (p. 39), [20-F](#) (p. 39), [federal or provincial corporate filings](#) (p. 39), [news sources](#) (p. 44), [industry publications](#) (p. 46), [fee-based sites](#) (p. 43)

PROFIT CENTRES

In this section of the research, we are trying to get at where specifically the company currently makes its money. Later, we will analyze where it plans to grow its business in the future (see Long-Term Strategy). In order to narrow in on which portions of the business are most important (i.e. currently profitable or strategically significant) to the employer, you need to understand the many different factors that can have either a positive or negative effect on the company's operations and strategies.

Product and Services

- Define what the company actually *does* – what product does it make, or what services does it provide?
- What is or are the company's primary NAICS/SIC code(s)?
- Be sure to note if the company has a specialty or unique product available.
- Is the product/service readily available through competitors?
- Provide percentages in terms of various activities.

Transportation/Distribution of Products and Services

- How do supplies, products, services or clients leave the facilities?
- Are any of these forms of transportation/distribution/dissemination unionized?

A note on NAICS/SIC codes

The Standard Industrial Code (SIC), now largely replaced by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), is a classification system that provides a key to the employer's activities and to gathering information on the industry and competitors. We have NAICS/SIC codes available for most employers, but these can also be located by employer on the Industry Canada site.

Sources: Company website (p. 37), AIF (p. 38), Annual Report (p. 38), 10-K (p. 39), 20-F (p. 39), news sources (p. 44), industry publications (p. 46), Industry Canada (p. 46), fee-based sites (p. 43)

Business Segments

For the purposes of managing and reporting diverse operations, most companies divide up their business into segments. Divisions can be based on products, customers, functions, or geography.

It is important to define the company's business segments because it gives an idea of how the company is managed – its command and authority structures. It will also help determine where the company is making money as well help identify any long-term goals that may be in place (see also **Long-Term Strategy and Financial Analysis**).

If it is not obvious what the divisions are, look at the management structure. Companies will likely have a manager, vice-president, or president responsible for each segment or division.

Sources: [Company website](#) (p. 37), [AIF](#) (p. 38), [10-K](#) (p. 39), [20-F](#) (p. 39), [fee-based sites](#) (p. 43)

Facilities

Develop a list of all of the company's facilities with a description of what is done at each facility and the number of people employed there. Determine which facilities are unionized and which are not (see **Workforce**, below, for information on finding out if facilities are organized). Union workers, especially USW members, can be important allies in any fight.

Note what products are made at each facility and whether there is any overlap in capabilities (i.e. can one facility manufacture the same product as another facility or is each facility uniquely equipped to produce a particular product or group of products).

Sources: [Company website](#) (p. 37), [AIF](#) (p. 38), [10-K](#) (p. 39), [20-F](#) (p. 39), [fee-based sites](#) (p. 43)

Workforce

- How many people does the company employ?
- What is the general demographic and what is the labour market like for this type of work? As mentioned above, it is important to know the unionization information for all facilities as well.
- Are the company's employees members of a labour organization? If so, which one(s)?

The total number of employees can most often be found in the company's annual report on the website. Failing this, a report from Hoovers (fee-based site) may provide this information. If there is USW representation at the company, be in contact with USW Strategic Campaigns staff for information on the union's relationship with the company.

Sources: [AIF](#) (p. 38), [10-K](#) (p. 39), [20-F](#) (p. 39), [fee-based sites](#) (p. 43). Also see if the company has a blog or website where workers might discuss their concerns about the company. Talk to workers. Do a [CanLII](#) (p. 49) search of the employer to see if any labour board or health and safety cases come up. See [Negotech](#) (p. 48) or and [other provincial collective agreement databases](#) (p. 48) to find out if facilities are unionized. For comparative data on industry wages and benefits, see [Statistics Canada](#) (p. 47).

Industry Overview

Once you know what a company does and have a general ideal of how its business is set up, understanding the industry in which it conducts that business is key to getting a deeper sense of its current operations and also eventually of its long-term strategy. Who are the major competitors, customers and suppliers, and what are the major trends? Search for publications that follow the industry closely. Identify any market factors that are impacting the industry.

Use the NAICS/SIC code(s) for your target to help gather information on the industry.

Sources: [Industry publications](#) (p. 46), [Industry Canada](#) (p. 46), [LexisNexis](#) (p.44)

Customers

Know who the company's target customers are. They will either be individual customers, or institutional (business) customers. It may be helpful to speak to members or contacts in the company's shipping department to find out where the product is going. In some industries, it is customary for a company to issue a press release to announce new contracts with key customers.

There are two types of customers to consider: institutional customers and end use customers. For example, a tire company will sell product to manufacturers and major retail distributors. It is important to consider both the distribution network and the public consumer.

Sources: [Company website](#) (p. 37), [AIF](#) (p. 38), [Annual Report](#) (p. 38), [10-K](#) (p. 39), [20-F](#) (p. 39), [news sources](#) (p. 44), [industry publications](#) (p. 46), [Industry Canada](#) (p. 46), [Public Works and Government Services of Canada](#) (p. 47) (to see if your target received federal government contracts)

Suppliers

Knowing what materials the company needs and where it gets them can be hard to find out. If the information is not available, it would be useful to look at the raw materials markets (there may be only a few suppliers), and read about the production process to see what goes into the finished product. You could also look into the markets for those commodities. Most commodities are traded on regional exchanges so you can try to look for information on those markets by searching through a search engine.

Looking at the raw materials market will allow you to see whether there are multiple suppliers. More suppliers means that the supplier that the target company uses will have little power in affecting operations, as the company can choose to switch to another supplier.

Sources: [Industry Canada](#) (p. 46), [company website](#) (p. 37) (check news releases portion of site), [industry publications](#) (p. 46), [AIF](#) (p. 38), [Annual Report](#) (p. 38), [10-K](#) (p. 39), [20-F](#) (p. 39)

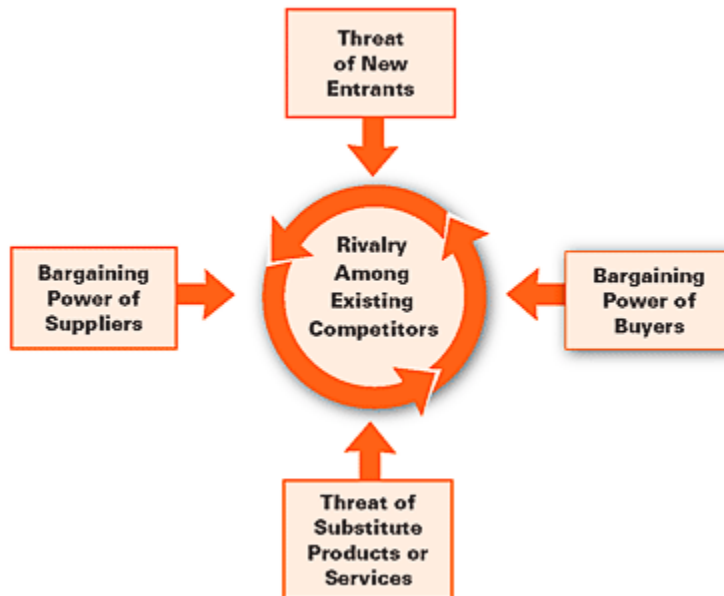
Putting it All Together

Review the Company's Operations to Identify Profit Centres and Vulnerabilities

Operations

Once you have a sense of what a company does, how its business is organized, and the industry it operates in, you gain a better understanding of the company's operations as a whole and can better identify where its profit centres are, and where its vulnerabilities may be. The chart below gives you a way to look at a company's operations and to focus in on the factors that have a high degree of effect on day-to-day operational decisions. If the effect of one of these factors is high, then this indicates a vulnerable point within the

company, as it highlights an area over which the company does not have a high level of control.



Porter, Michael E. *The Five Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy*. Retrieved on June 20, 2011 from hbr.org/2008/01/the-five-competitive-forces-that-shape-strategy/ar/1

Rivalry Among Existing Competitors

Is there a high level of rivalry in the employer's industry, and to what extent is the industry organized? Is the employer operating in a highly competitive industry where it is one of the few remaining unionized shops, or conversely, is it a dominant player in a relatively stable industry with high union density?

Bargaining Power of Suppliers

Consider the raw materials market or the company suppliers, taking note of how many options there are. When the company has few options for obtaining its raw materials, its relationships with suppliers are critical (and possibly vulnerable). If there are few suppliers, check if their workforces are unionized—you may uncover useful points of leverage and opportunities to find allies which will strengthen your campaign.

Threat of New Entrants

The threat of new entrants and competition are similar factors. If the company is constantly feeling pressure from the industry, it makes it more vulnerable. An employer under pressure may be more likely to be adamant about the need to slash labour costs in order to keep up with existing and future competition.

Threat of Substitute Products

The threat of substitute products or services should be taken into account. If there are other products that can be used as replacements, this may affect decisions regarding boycotts and product related tactics.

Bargaining Power of Buyers

Last, but not least, is the bargaining power of buyers. This refers to the customers' relationships with the company. Companies are constantly nurturing these relationships, so it is important to look at ways to affect this channel when planning your campaign.

Financial Analysis

As much as it is useful to consider the structure of the business and the external factors that influence its operations, you will have to review the company's financials to get a true idea of what its profit centres are. This financial analysis gives an idea of how the company is doing and where it is going. Copies of the Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Cash Flow Statement, and Key Ratios should be kept on file, and they should all come from the same source, as some sites will report data differently.

See the [Financial Statements](#) section for details on where to find this information.

Segment Analysis

The profit centres will be identified through the financial analysis. To do so, break down the company in terms of sales and in terms of profits. This information can most easily be found in the company's annual report.

It is important to not only identify where sales are highest within the company, but also where profit margins are highest. Creating pie charts will simplify visually and allow for ease of reporting.

Note that profit centres are not always the segment with the highest income, or even necessarily the highest profits; margins are also important.

KEY DECISION MAKERS

Who is really in control of the company? It is often not obvious (plant management, or the person sitting across from you at the bargaining table) because each company is structured differently. While there is not one simple approach to finding out who calls the shots in the company, there are some aspects of the internal politics of the company that can give you an idea:

- If any shareholder holds more than 10% of the outstanding shares, that individual (or institution) likely has some significant influence.
- If a shareholder holds more than 30%, they are almost certainly a key decision maker.
- If the company's founder, or a daughter/son of the founder, is still involved with the company, take a look at that individual. She/he may have influence that goes beyond mere title.
- CEOs that have been with the company for a long time tend to stay in power because they are running the company. Conversely, if there is a high turnover in the company's top management positions, it is a good indicator that the board of directors has a lot of influence.
- If a class of the company's stock has disproportionate voting power, it is a sure sign that the owners of those shares have a good deal of influence.

As you research the top management and directors, it is important not to get too bogged down, especially in the initial stages of research.

Management

Top Management

Provide brief biographies of the company's top managers. Note whether each manager is involved with any other companies, and any corporate boards the manager sits on. Also, list any major scandals, non-profit boards, and political activity involvement they may have. Take into account each manager's ownership stake in the company (available in the MD&A for publicly traded companies). Biographical information can often be found on the company website.

- Note the compensation they receive from the company (see Management Information Circular)
- Summarize any recent management changes

There are several great resources with encyclopaedic data on corporate officers.

Directors

Provide similar research on each member of the board of directors. Be aware of what corporations the directors may work for, or other boards they may sit on.

Sources: [Company website](#) (p. 37), [AIF](#) (p. 38), [Management Information Circular](#) (p. 38), [10-K](#) (p. 39), [Proxy Statement](#) (p. 39), [fee-based directories](#) (p. 43), [activist research sources](#) (p. 45) such as CorpWatch, [LinkedIn](#) (p. 52), [Facebook](#) (p. 52), [news sources](#) (p. 44), see also [federal or provincial corporate filings](#) (p. 39) which in some cases include the home addresses of a company's directors.

Major Shareholders

For public corporations in Canada, a list of individuals and institutions holding more than 10% of the shares of the company can be found in the Management Information Circular report. Provide some background information on each shareholder.

If the company has to report in the United States (for example, if its shares are traded on NYSE or NASDAQ), its Proxy report will provide a list of all shareholders holding more than 5% of the outstanding shares of the company.

Sources: [News sources](#) (p. 44), [Management Information Circular](#) (p. 38) (Canada), [Proxy Statement](#) (p. 39) (US)

Lenders

Lenders and other creditors can often become major players in corporate operations.

Public companies disclose “material” or significant debt obligations in their annual filings. For private companies, the best way to get a sense of a company's creditors is to access the publicly available information on mortgages and registered securities.

Sources: [AIF](#) (p. 38), [10-K](#) (p. 39), [Real Estate Records](#) (p. 40) and [Secured Creditors](#) (p. 40)

LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Business Strategy

It is important to understand the major points of the company's business strategy. Key information is generally in the annual report and the quarterly earnings report.

Another great source of information on a company's strategy is the investor relations section of a company's website. Transcripts and recordings of investor conference calls can be very useful. Information is given through the executive presentation as well as the following question and answer period.

This information is difficult to find for private companies, as many choose to keep this information secret. If the company is private, it would be useful to obtain research analyst reports about the industry trends. This will give an idea of where the target company is going.

Sources: [Company website](#) (p. 37) (check news releases for acquisitions and other development that may hint at strategy), [industry publications](#) (p. 46), [AIF](#) (p. 38), [Annual Report](#) (p. 38), [10-K](#) (p. 39), [20-F](#) (p. 39)

Outside Stakeholders

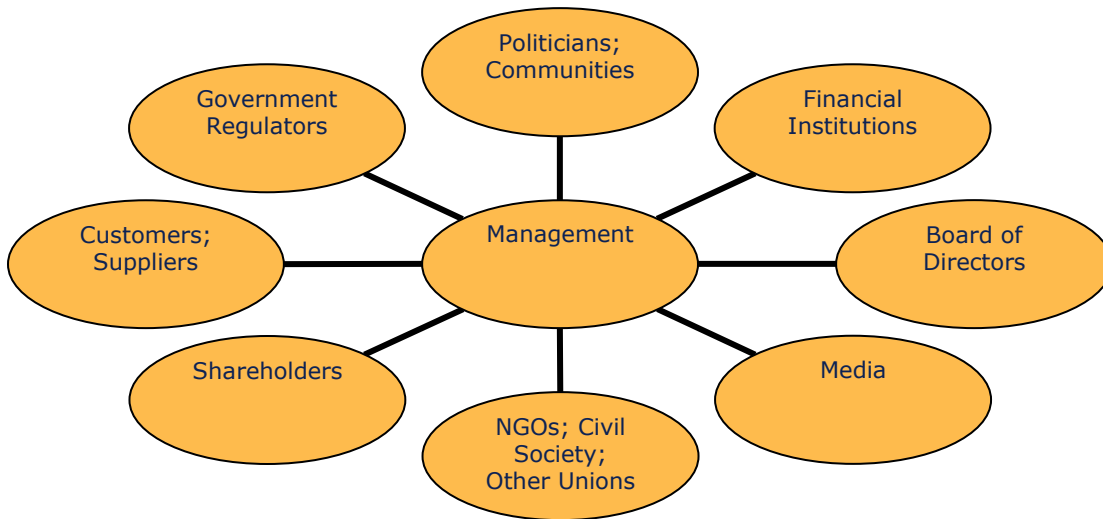
Anyone who has an interest in the company and will be affected by it is a stakeholder. Even if a corporation tries to keep a low profile, there are still a number of people/groups to deal with. For example, local and federal regulatory agencies such as local zoning boards and Environment Canada all create a set of regulations under which companies have to operate. Unions need to get involved with all aspects of regulations and understand them to fully leverage their position against the company.

It is important to realize that stakeholders are *any* individuals and groups that are affected by the company. Local communities and families are two examples of outside stakeholders.

A company depends on various stakeholders to operate and secure profits. All employers depend on having a stable relationship with key stakeholders and aspects of the environment in which they operate. Without good relationships with customers, suppliers, lenders, shareholders, regulators, etc., a company cannot make money. When key relationships are disrupted, the company may experience major difficulty.

Research on these stakeholders must be conducted. An effective campaign strategy will ultimately focus on influencing or impacting one or more of the employer's current

relationships to better position the union to achieve the goal of the campaign. List each outside stakeholder involved with the target company using the diagram below.

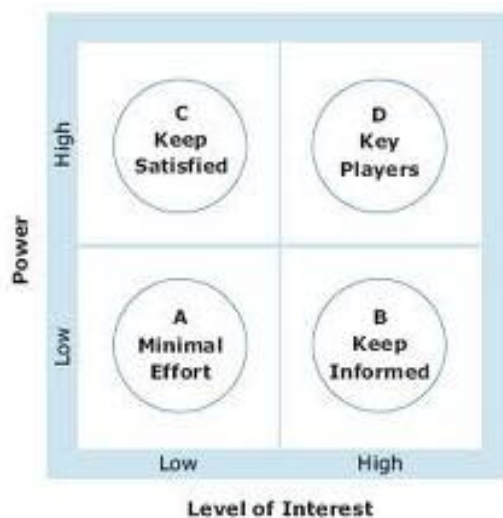


Another useful diagram that can help union researchers keep track of a target employer's relationships with various stakeholders was developed by Tom Juravich and is attached for your information as [Appendix C](#).

Stakeholder Analysis

Each stakeholder group could be a potential ally and a specific target of a strategic campaign.

A good way to evaluate stakeholders as potential targets is using the diagram on the right. It is a visual aid to identify the power and interest levels of each stakeholder. The stakeholders in the highest power/interest position are generally the key players in the situation. Many factors play into deciding where each stakeholder should be placed. Do not just take into account decision making, determine what level of impact each stakeholder could have on the company.



Using this diagram, we can develop a campaign focused on *secondary* targets. A secondary target would be where the power is high but the level of interest is low. For instance, top management and CEOs are considered *primary targets* as they have the most power to impact a corporate decision and also the highest level of interest. Although they are the key players and may have played a role in causing the labour dispute, they may also be the least interested in compromising with a union. They are often referred to as “Kool-Aid Drinkers”, and are the most likely to go down with the ship, and the least likely to compromise with the union.

In contrast, so-called outside members of the Board of Directors—or those who attend a few meetings per year and derive most of their income from a different source (many board members may be CEOs of other companies—may be good targets if a secondary campaign is developed to impact their company and their chief source of income). At the same time, a major shareholder may be passive and have low interest, but could have some significant power to affect decision-making and alter outcomes. Focusing a campaign on a major shareholder can change them from a passive to active investor and is often a good way to build leverage.

CORPORATE LANDSCAPE

Corporations do not exist in a vacuum; even corporations that try to keep a low profile have to deal with local, provincial, and federal regulatory agencies. From local zoning boards to Environment Canada, companies have to walk a political tightrope to operate. By understanding this political and regulatory landscape, unions can generate leverage by getting involved with the regulatory functions that oversee the company's operations.

It's also important to remember that we are not the only ones who are impacted by the company's actions. Pollution can wreak havoc on local communities and families, poisoning drinking water and contaminating soil; poor employment practices impact families and communities, not just workers. Taking a look at how the company is impacting its community can help us in identifying potential allies.

Legal

Determine whether the target company, subsidiaries, or executives are named in any pending lawsuits. Also, check to see whether they were involved in a significant lawsuit in the recent past.

This information can be used to bring certain actions into the public eye. It may also give information as to how the company will respond to the labour dispute.

Publicly-held companies must disclose significant lawsuits and damage awards in their AIFs or 10-Ks. All companies can be searched on the very useful CanLII site (Canadian Institute of Legal Information) for involvement in legal proceedings.

Past bankruptcies or insolvencies or CCAA (*Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act*) proceedings involving an employer or predecessor company can be a rich source of information on a company's business.

CanLII (p. 49), bankruptcy and insolvency and CCAA records (p. 49), AIF (p. 38), 10-K (p. 39)

Regulatory

Some industries (airlines, nuclear, food services, health care, etc.) are heavily regulated and subject to oversight by government agencies at the federal or provincial levels. Find out about the relevant agencies to verify if the employer is in compliance with the applicable rules and regulations.

Employment Standards, Health & Safety

All employers are subject to employment standards and health and safety regulations. Depending on the employer, provincial or federal legislation will apply. You can consult HRSDC or the relevant provincial Ministry of Labour site to access information on employment standards and health and safety violations.

Serious health & safety violations, and major workplace accidents and fatalities will very often be reported in the news and should come up in an online news search.

Human Rights, Labour Arbitrations

Search CanLII for information on human rights cases and labour arbitration awards involving your employer.

Environment

Environmental regulations are also highly relevant to many of our employers. Again, a CanLII search will reveal some court cases involving environmental legislation (including prosecutions under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and equivalent provincial legislation).

In Ontario, you can search the Environmental Registry by employer to see public notices about environmental matters, such as an employer's applications to discharge substances into the environment or disposing of waste.

Much like health & safety matters, serious environmental violations are newsworthy matters that will come up in online news searches.

Finally, USW has formed alliances with environmental groups in both Canada and the US to confront the anti-union and environmentally irresponsible practices of corporations. Known as the Blue-Green Alliance, the USW's relationship with the Sierra Club in the US and Environmental Defence in Canada could be very valuable in campaigns, particularly at the local level.

CanLII (p. 49), and see generally Legal, Regulatory and Community Resources (p. 49)

Civil Society

- Are there known issues at the target company that might impact the surrounding community?
- Are any activist organizations currently campaigning against the target company?

It's important to know who these groups are and what their goals are even if the union is not interested in getting involved in those issues or support them openly. If there is a current campaign by an organization or community group that is worth its salt, you should be able to find at least something out about it by searching through local newspapers. You may also want to see what comes up through general searches on a search engine or digging through CorpWatch, Dirt Diggers Digest or relevant Indymedia sites.

Sources: [News sources](#) (p. 44); the [OFL](#) (p. 50) also has a comprehensive index of links to various civil society groups, as well links to governmental sites and other organizations. See generally [Community /Political/Labour](#) (p. 50)

Global Solidarity & USW Alliances

Another aspect of the corporate landscape is the possibility of involving fellow workers or other allies in the campaign. Working with Global Union Federations (GUFs) allows for the global mobilization of members. In a corporate landscape where there are increasing numbers of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) this can be beneficial to your campaign on a local level as information sharing is facilitated by GUFs, and there is strength in numbers.

In addition to GUFs, the USW holds a number of alliances with other labour and community groups. It is important to reach out to gain support. Depending on the chosen strategies within the campaign, the presence of other labour groups may be a catalyst for victory.

Sources: Global Unions' [List of Member Organizations \(p. 51\)](#), [List of USW Alliances \(p. 51\)](#), [Federations and labour councils in Canada \(p. 51\)](#)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Financial statements are crucial to understanding the operations of a company. They may seem daunting at first glance, but once you understand the basic framework and key things to look for, financial statements simply become one more tool for company research.

A public corporation is required by law to release their financial statements, unlike a private corporation, which is not obligated to do so. It is most likely harder to find financial information on private corporations.

All-in-One Sources

Looking at financial data will be far less daunting if you become familiar with so-called “all-in-one” sources that are offered for free by **Yahoo**, **Bloomberg** and **Google**. These sources offer an array of information to quickly get an understanding of a publicly-held company. They provide neatly organized segments on the corporate officers and board, earning/revenues, ratio analyses, insider trading, stock ownership, comparisons with similar companies, charts, etc.

In addition, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) can offer very concrete information on companies that may not report in the US and Canada. In addition, the GRI, which was created as an initiative to encourage socially responsible investing, requires participating companies to report based on established standards. While voluntary, it can be an important source of information

Sources: Yahoo! Finance (p. 42), Bloomberg (p. 42), Google Finance (p. 42), GRI (p. 42), fee-based sites (p. 43). For the complete financial statements of public companies, search SEDAR (Canada) (p. 38) and EDGAR (US) (p. 38).
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Income Statement

Description

The income statement, also called statement of earnings or consolidated income, measures a company’s economic activity over a given period of time. It displays how much money a company took in (revenues), how much it has spent (expenses), and the difference between the two (profit). This statement contains the information most often mentioned in the press or in financial reports – figures such as total revenue, net income, or earnings per share. The basic format of an income statement is as follows:

Total Revenue	xxx
- Cost of Goods Sold (cost of revenue)	(xxx)
= Gross Margin (gross profit)	xxx
- Operating expenses	(xxx)
= Net Income Before Taxes	xxx
- Income Taxes	(xxx)
= Net Income	xxx

Income statements allow you to assess a company's business performance. Simply put, it tells you whether the company is making money. A firm must be able to bring in more money than it spends or it will not be in business for very long. Firms with low expenses relative to revenues – and thus, high profits relative to revenues – are doing well in terms of cash flow from operations. These types of firms are making money, and it is important to know where they are making money within the company before entering into a dispute (see [Profit Centres](#)).

Revenues, Expenses, and Profit

Each of the three main elements of the income statement is described below:

- **Revenues** are most often represented by a single number, the amount of money a company brought in during a specific time period – their sales. Sometimes, larger companies break down revenues in ways that provide more information (e.g. separated by geographical location or business segment).
- **Expenses** are the economic costs of earning revenues. There are many types of expenses, but the two most common are cost of goods sold (cost of revenue) and SG&A (selling, general, and administrative) expenses. Cost of goods sold (COGS), or cost of revenue is most directly involved in creating revenue – how much does it cost to produce a product. Costs such as materials, labour and anything *directly* involved in production are included in COGS. Operating expenses includes SG&A (marketing, supplies, etc) and other costs of running a business (salaries, technology, etc). Amortization (depreciation) is a charge that appears on the income statement to reflect the wear and tear on things like equipment, buildings, and other capital assets used in operations. Money is not paid out, but the figure represents a decline in value of the asset. Finally, financial expenses such as interest and taxes are also paid (also called non-operating expenses).
- **Profits** are the money left over after paying all expenses.

$$\text{Profits} = \text{Revenues} - \text{Expenses}$$

There are a few different types of profit to be aware of

- **Gross Profit**, or **Gross Margin** is the money left over after paying for the cost of goods sold (the cost of revenue)

Gross Profit = Revenues – Cost of Goods Sold

- **Operating Profit**, or **Earnings Before Interest & Taxes (EBIT)** is the money left over after paying for all expenses

EBIT = Revenues – Cost of Goods Sold – Operating Expenses

- **Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, & Amortization (EBITDA)** is a good indicator of cash flow and profitability

EBITDA = EBIT + Depreciation + Amortization

- **Net Income**, or net earnings, represents a company's profit after all expenses (operating and financial) have been paid. This is also called the “bottom line” and is generally the figure people refer to when they use the word “profit” or “earnings.”

Example

ADF GROUP INC. | Press Release | April 14, 2011 | Page 4

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF EARNINGS AND COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Fiscal years ended January 31,	2011	2010
(In thousands of \$)	\$	\$
Revenues	55,268	65,740
Cost of goods sold	38,196	47,087
Gross margin before foreign exchange variation	17,072	18,653
(Gain) loss on foreign exchange	(875)	(1,680)
Gross margin	17,947	20,333
Selling and administrative expenses	6,201	4,493
Earnings before undernoted items:	11,746	15,840
Amortization		
Amortization of property, plant and equipment	3,021	2,657
Amortization of intangible assets	339	400
	3,360	3,057
Earnings before finance charges (interest income) and income taxes	8,386	12,783
Finance charges (interest income)	99	(489)
Earnings before income taxes	8,287	13,272
Income taxes	4,544	6,280
Net earnings and comprehensive income	3,743	6,992
Basic earnings per share	0.11	0.20
Diluted earnings per share	0.11	0.19
Average number of outstanding shares (in thousands)	33,642	35,480
Average number of outstanding diluted shares (in thousands)	34,296	36,334

On the income statement, there are things you should look for:

- **Earnings per share (EPS).** This indicates the profit per share. If EPS trends upward, it is a good indicator that the company is doing well.
- **Obvious changes in the values.** In this example, revenue decreased from the year 2010 to 2011 (\$65,740 to \$55,268) as did cost of goods sold. However, expenses for the year ending in 2011 increased significantly (\$4,493 to \$6,201). After subtracting taxes, net earnings (net income) for 2011 were only \$3,743 in comparison to \$6,992 in 2010.
- Strong **Operating Profit** (or Earnings before interest and taxes – EBIT) is a sign of the company's underlying profitability of operations. Conversely, if it is weak, or there is a downward trend, then the company is likely not operating to its full potential/profitability. It is calculated using the following:

$$\text{Operating Profit} = \text{Revenues} - \text{Expenses}$$

- **Net Income (earnings) should be positive!** If not, or if there is a decrease in net income, then it is important to look to see where the loss is occurring. In this case, there is a significant decrease in Net earnings. One cause is that revenues are down in 2011, which shrinks profit margins.

Balance Sheet

Description

The balance sheet is a summary of a company's financial position at a point in time (also known as the "statement of financial position"). It provides a snapshot of the company's financial health as of the date provided on the financial statement. It tells you how much a company owns (assets) and how much it owes (liabilities). The difference between what a company owns and what it owes is its equity, also known as "net assets," "stockholder's equity," or "net worth." Generally, if a company has lots of assets relative to liabilities, it is in good shape. Conversely, a company with a large amount of liabilities relative to assets may be in trouble and should be analyzed more carefully.

The basic concept of a balance sheet is based on the following:

$$\text{Assets} = \text{Liabilities} + \text{Owners' Equity}$$

The key is that both sides of the equation must be equal, or "balanced."

Assets, Liabilities, and Equity

Each of the three main elements of the balance sheet is described below:

- **Assets** provide a company with some sort of future benefit that is measurable. They are divided into two types: current and non-current (fixed). Current assets are used up within one year (one business cycle) and are considered to be more "liquid" because they can easily be converted to cash to meet obligations. Some examples of current assets are cash, inventory, and accounts receivable (money expected to come in). On the other hand, non-current assets benefit the company beyond one year so they will not be used up within one year. An example of a non-current asset is property, plant and equipment (PP&E).
- **Liabilities** are a company's obligation to pay money or provide goods or services to suppliers, lenders, customers, and the government. Similar to assets, there are two types of liabilities: current and non-current. Current liabilities are obligations the company must pay within one year. Examples are accounts payable and short-term debt. Non-current liabilities represent money the company owes one year or more in the future. Examples are long-term debt and pension liabilities.
- **Equity** is the amount owners have invested in a company – owner's equity. Other common terms for equity are "shareholder's equity" (corporations), "partner's equity" (partnership), and "proprietor's equity" (proprietorship). There

are two major categories of equity: paid-in capital and retained earnings. Paid-in capital is the amount of cash investment made when the share was first offered to the public. It represents how much money the company received when it sold its shares. Retained earnings represent the total profits the company has earned since it began, not including what has been paid to shareholders as dividends. Since retained earnings are cumulative, if a company has lost money over time, the number may be negative and would be renamed “accumulated deficit.”

Example

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEETS

As at January 31,	2011	2010
(In thousands of \$)	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash and cash equivalents	18,677	5,770
Short-term investments (Note 4)	2,787	11,652
Accounts receivable (Note 5)	22,802	14,850
Income taxes	—	442
Holdbacks on contracts	167	2,692
Investment tax credits (Note 14)	—	536
Work in progress	403	1,574
Inventories (Note 6)	3,865	3,093
Prepaid expenses	398	334
Derivative financial instruments (Note 22)	741	832
Future income tax assets (Note 14)	4,952	3,182
	54,792	44,957
Holdbacks on long-term contracts	3,562	1,297
Investment tax credits (Note 14)	2,601	2,065
Property, plant and equipment (Notes 2 and 7)	42,227	42,760
Intangible assets (Notes 2 and 8)	2,601	2,590
Other assets (Note 9)	251	247
Future income tax assets (Note 14)	2,424	9,452
	108,458	103,368
LIABILITIES		
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued charges (Note 11)	5,365	4,681
Income taxes	159	—
Deferred revenues	4,994	2,242
Derivative financial instruments (Note 22)	45	—
Future income tax liabilities (Note 14)	62	—
Current portion of long-term debt (Note 12)	2,513	2,422
	13,138	9,345
Long-term debt (Note 12)	6,151	4,645
Future income tax liabilities (Note 14)	33	713
	19,322	14,703
Commitments and contingencies (Notes 17 and 18)		
SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY		
Retained earnings	13,542	9,799
Accumulated other comprehensive income	144	144
	13,686	9,943
Capital stock (Note 13)	69,950	75,351
Contributed surplus	5,500	3,371
	89,136	88,665
	108,458	103,368

Note that both current and non-current assets and liabilities will be reported separately. There are certain things to watch for in a balance statement:

- **Increasing inventory levels** may be an indicator that more product is being produced than sold.

- **Obvious changes in the values from year to year.** For example, in the year ending 2011, cash and cash equivalents has a value of \$18,677, which is approximately 325% higher than in 2010. The key is looking to see why the change occurred.
- If **receivables are increasing faster than sales revenue**, then the company is not collecting their bills on time – indicates possible red flags.
- Where liabilities are concerned, take note if a company has **significantly increased debt levels**. In this example, debt levels remain relatively unchanged.
- A company with **negative equity** is likely facing serious risk of bankruptcy (not always).
- **Debt-to-Equity ratio (D/E)**, which measures risk to lenders:

$$D/E = \text{Total Liabilities} / \text{Total Equity}$$

In this case, D/E for 2011 = $19,322 / 13,686 = 1.41$. A higher D/E ratio (such as this) indicates that the company is not putting money back into the company, and that the company is financed through debt. This means that the company is in a risky financial position.

Statement of Cash Flows

Description

The statement of cash flows reports how much cash went into and out of a company during a specified time frame. While this seems similar to the income statement, the difference is based on a complex concept called accrual accounting.

Accrual accounting, used for the income statement, requires companies to record when a transaction occurs **not** when cash is exchanged. In practice, it is complex. The solution to viewing cash flow in and out is cash accounting, used for the statement of cash flows. The company records cash transactions to get a good picture of money flowing into and out of the company.

The statement of cash flows shows the company's ability to generate cash. It can be a good predictor of future problems the company may face if there is poor or negative cash flow.

Three Elements of the Statement of Cash Flows

Companies can generate and use cash in a number of different ways so the statement of cash flows is separated into three sections: cash flows from operating activities, from investing activities, and from financing activities.

- **The cash flows from operating activities** shows cash generated from normal business operations (not activities like investing or borrowing). This is an indicator of how much cash a company generates that will ultimately benefit shareholders. (Usually a positive value)
- **The cash flows from investing activities** shows the amount of funds a company spends on investments. Investments are classified as two types: capital expenditures or monetary investments. Capital expenditures are money spent on items such as new equipment or anything needed to keep the business running. Monetary investments are things like the purchase or sale of money market funds. (Usually a negative value)
- **The cash flows from financing activities** display activities involved in transactions with the company's owners or debtors. Basically it is any changes in long-term liabilities and capital stock accounts (e.g. dividends paid to shareholders). (Usually a positive value)
- If the net balance is positive, this means that the company generated more cash than it started with and vice versa if it is negative.

Free Cash Flow

Free cash flow is the amount of excess cash a company generated in a given time period. It is considered "free" because it is either used to benefit shareholders or invest in new opportunities for the business without hurting existing operations. The most common method of determining existing free cash flow is:

$$\text{Free Cash Flow} = \text{Cash from Operations} - \text{Capital Expenditures}$$

Capital expenditures can be found in the "Cash flows from investing activities" section of the Cash Flow Statement.

Example

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS

Fiscal years ended January 31,	2011	2010
(In thousands of \$)	\$	\$
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Net earnings	3,743	6,992
Adjustments for:		
Amortization of property, plant and equipment (Note 2)	3,021	2,657
Amortization of intangible assets (Note 2)	339	400
Gain on disposal of property, plant and equipment	(52)	(9)
Unrealized loss (gain) on derivative financial instruments	136	(1,890)
Non-cash exchange loss	266	1,541
Interest capitalized on long-term debt	15	20
Stock-based compensation (Note 13)	288	308
Future income taxes (Note 14)	4,011	6,045
Net earnings adjusted for non-monetary items	11,767	16,064
Changes in non-cash operating working capital items (Note 16)	(3,320)	(15,781)
	8,447	283
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Disposal (acquisition) of short-term investments	8,865	(5,652)
Net acquisition of property, plant and equipment (Note 7)	(2,302)	(4,046)
Net acquisition of intangible assets (Note 8)	(350)	(588)
Proceeds from disposal of property, plant and equipment	—	33
Increase in other assets	(4)	(62)
	6,209	(10,315)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Issuance of long-term debt	4,370	—
Repayment of long-term debt	(2,333)	(1,718)
Issuance of subordinate voting shares (Note 13)	176	87
Redemption of subordinate voting shares (Note 13)	(3,736)	(4,533)
	(1,523)	(6,164)
Impact of fluctuations in foreign exchange rate on cash	(226)	(524)
Cash inflows (outflows)	12,907	(16,720)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year (Note 16)	5,770	22,490
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year (Note 16)	18,677	5,770

KNOW YOUR SOURCES

This section provides some more background on several of the sources referred to in the earlier part of the guide. These will be useful in finding information on the target company and the industry it operates in. No two companies are the same, so there is no cookie cutter approach to finding important information on an employer.

The key is to be creative, search the internet, the public library (many large city libraries have online catalogues including searchable articles and other resources), the local court houses, and anywhere you think you might find relevant information.

Keep in mind that not every source is available for every employer. For example, non-profit and public sector (government) employers do not file the same type of regulatory reports as for-profit corporations. Because they are not required to file reports with most government agencies, privately held corporations are difficult to find information on.

However, regardless of the employer or the sector, there is valuable information to be learned through researching your company.

Company Website

Most companies have a website, and it is a great place to start your research. While you should keep in mind that an employer uses its site as a marketing tool and therefore it is not unbiased, the company website is still very good for gathering basic information and more.

Here is some of the information that might appear on an employer's website:

- Products
- Facility locations
- Executive biographies
- Major customers
- News releases
- Corporate structure
- Industry information
- "Corporate Citizenship" information – Code of Conduct
- Major suppliers

Publicly-traded companies will also have **an investor relations** section on their website, which will give you access to the annual and quarterly reports as well as other filings and reports filed with securities regulators.

Public Companies

Public companies are required to file detailed reports on their business, including lists of subsidiaries, a history of the business, significant acquisitions, loans, executive and director compensation, employees, principal shareholders, and other information and risk factors that may be relevant to investors. Providing false information on these types of documents is an offence and subjects the company to penalties. As a result, the documents corporations are legally required to file with securities regulators are the most reliable source of information on them.

Canadian Companies - SEDAR

www.sedar.com

SEDAR (System for Electronic Document Analysis and Retrieval) is the online cataloguing system for filings that are required by the Canadian government for publicly traded companies.

Especially useful:

- **Annual information form or AIF:** Corporate structure (including listing of subsidiaries), history and general development of the business, general description of business (including operations and divisions), capital structure, material contracts, loans, etc.
- **Management Information Circular:** Includes notice of annual shareholder meeting, listing of all shareholders who hold 10% or more of the shares, and executive and director compensation details.
- **Management Discussion & Analysis or MD&A:** A discussion of the financial statements and any adjustments or extraordinary items (management's perspective on the Company, its performance and its strategy for the future). Also included in the Annual Report.
- **Annual Report:** An often glossy and graphic-filled report the company prepares for its shareholders each year. Includes MD&A, Auditor's report, a balance sheet, financial statements and notes, and information about the company's operations.
- **Annual Report on Form 20-F:** A US form that may be filed on SEDAR (as well as EDGAR, see below) by companies who do business in the US.
- **Financial Statements:** See [FINANCIAL STATEMENTS](#) (p. 27) for help on making the most out of these in your research.

US Companies - EDGAR

www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml

EDGAR is the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings database, the primary source of financial and other information on US public companies.

Especially useful:

- **Annual (10-K) and quarterly (10-Q) reports:** A comprehensive summary of a company's performance. It provides information on the company's history, organizational structure, subsidiaries and an audited financial statement.
- **Proxy statements (DEF 14A):** An announcement and invitation to the company's annual shareholders meeting and explanation of matters that will be put up for a vote at the meeting. It includes some of the same information as the company's 10-K report; however it also provides the names, ages, and biographies of directors and top executives, as well as their salaries and other compensation (benefits, stock options, flights in the company jet, etc.) and their holdings in the company. Note that the Proxy also discloses the beneficial shareholders holding more than 5% of the company (it is obligated to do so).
- **20-F:** A report submitted by internationally based companies with businesses operating in the US. This is a version of the 10-K for foreign issuers.

Private Companies

Federal or Provincial Corporate Filings

Finding even basic information about small private companies beyond what appears on the company website can be an exercise in frustration. However, every corporation in Canada, whether publicly traded, privately held, or non-profit must register at the provincial or federal level in order to incorporate and do business. Industry Canada, or a branch of a provincial Ministry, such as the Ministry of Government Services in Ontario, is responsible for overseeing the registration process, and will also provide public access to at least some of the information that corporations must provide in their filings.

In some Canadian jurisdictions, you can obtain at least some of that information directly from the federal or provincial registrar online, while in others, you must order a search through a registered service provider. In almost all cases, there is a fee for obtaining copies of the filings. Along with the articles of incorporation, the materials should at least contain the exact legal name and mailing address of the company. Companies must also provide information such as the name (and, depending on the jurisdiction, sometimes home address) of each officer and director, and sometimes even shareholders. These facts are especially valuable when researching small, privately-held companies that may otherwise not be required to disclose much information.

The most basic document you can obtain from a provincial registrar is a corporation profile report. This simple but useful report will provide you with a company's legal name and corporation number, its date of incorporation, registered office address, and a list of its directors and officers. You will also receive a brief history of any amalgamations the corporation may have gone through in the past. Note that the

corporation profile report will not provide you with a list of shareholders, but knowing a private company's directors and officers may give you a good idea of who owns it by showing you who controls it.

You can search for a federally-incorporated company for free on the Industry Canada site using the following link: [Corporations Canada](#)*. You will only get a very basic report, but you can contact Corporations Canada to obtain the home addresses of the directors.

*(www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/cc/CorporationsCanada/fdrlCrpSrch.html?locale=en_CA)

Contact the Canadian National Office for assistance if you need to conduct a provincial search. The CNO maintains a subscription to OnCorps Direct Inc., the Ontario electronic business filings database. Even if you do not know in what jurisdiction your employer is incorporated, OnCorps can be used to conduct a nationwide and US search to identify the jurisdiction and order reports.

A list of provincial registrars is available here:

www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cd-dgc.nsf/eng/cs01134.html

Real Estate Records

The real estate holdings of corporations, like those of individuals, are a matter of public record, usually at the municipal and provincial levels. You can check the assessment rolls in the municipality in which the employer's facility is located (check the local municipalities' website to get the details on how to access that information, most likely in person at City Hall). In addition, using the facility's address, you can order a title search from the provincial land registrar to see the deed and what mortgages or other encumbrances are attached to the property. Check with the applicable provincial land registrar to get the details on how to obtain the documents on file (you may be able to obtain them online through a registered service provider). (Find the applicable land registrar by doing an online search for the name of your province + land registry).

Secured Creditors

Companies or individuals who lend money or supply valuable equipment to other companies will often protect their investments by registering a security against their customer's property. Once anyone registers a security (for example under the *Personal Property and Security Act* (PPSA) in Ontario), they become a secured creditor. If a customer fails to pay, the secured creditor can claim the property on which it has registered a security in order to recoup its investment. Registered securities are part of the public record and can be searched through the applicable provincial registries. In Ontario, OnCorps Direct Inc. allows us to search by company name to see if any securities are registered against it. This is an invaluable source of information on private

companies because it will reveal if the company has a lot of debt and who its creditors are.

Non-Profit Organizations

The **Canada Revenue Agency** (CRA) maintains a searchable list of Canadian charities:

www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/lstngs/menu-eng.html

You can obtain a copy of a charity's Annual Information Return which contains detailed financial information. The CRA database also allows you to see if a charity's charitable status was ever revoked. Of course, not all non-profit corporations or organizations are registered charities.

Imagine Canada has a subscription based directory to Foundations and Corporations:

www.imaginecanada.ca/directory

This database provides detailed information on Canadian funders only. Imagine Canada has been working with GuideStar (see below) to create a database of all tax-exempt and non-profit organizations in Canada. While this database is not yet operational as of the date of this printing, it is worth mentioning that there will eventually be a GuideStar Canada.

In addition, all incorporated non-profits would be listed in the federal or provincial registries (see the section on private companies).

For US-based non-profits, the best source is:

GuideStar

www.guidestar.org/

GuideStar offers a searchable database of more than 850,000 **tax-exempt/non-profit organizations**. Full reports (not available for every organization in the database) give a description of the organization, the IRS employer identification number (EIN), financial information from the 990 filing and names of board members. Requires a free registration.

Company Information Databases

Databases with information on major companies can help you research the target company and other industry players. Each database will have differing amounts of information available, and unfortunately, not all companies will have information reported on these databases. There are an enormous amount of free and for-fee corporate databases available online. What follows is a list of the databases we have found most

useful. If you find other useful sources, be sure to pass them on to the CNO so that they can be added here.

Free Directories

- **Bloomberg Business Week's Company Insight Center** – investing.businessweek.com/research/company/overview/overview.asp

Provides snapshots of public and private companies worldwide, as well as some financial and management information. Follow this link to perform a search on a public or private company (select the public or private tab above the search box)

investing.businessweek.com/research/common/symbollookup/symbollookup.asp?letterIn=A

- **Canadian Company Capabilities** (“CCC”, formerly known as Strategis) www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cc-rec.nsf/eng/home

A site of the Canadian government's agency Industry Canada, CCC is “a centrally maintained current searchable database of 60,000 Canadian businesses.” It provides basic profiles of both private and publicly traded Canadian companies. Unfortunately, private companies are not obligated to disclose financial information, but you can verify the company name, address and products or services.

- **Corporate Information** – www.corporateinformation.com

Not specifically Canadian, but reports on non-US companies. Definitely better for public companies, it provides some free information, but most content is available for a fee.

- **Google Finance Canada** - www.google.ca/finance

Quick information on public companies: stock quotes and charts, related companies (useful for identifying competitors), news items, list of officers and directors, short summary of the company's business.

- **GRI (Global Reporting Initiative)** - www.globalreporting.org/Home

GRI is a network-based organization that produces a sustainability reporting framework that is widely used around the world. This database can be useful for locating information on companies that do not report in Canada or in the US.

- **Power Profiles (D&B Canada Business Directory)** - www.powerprofiles.com/CA

This is a good free place to look for private companies, but not comprehensive. Offers an online business directory featuring company profiles, some corporate records, financial information (such as estimated sales), and lists of facilities, subsidiaries and parent companies.

- **StockHouse** - <http://www.stockhouse.com/>

A very useful Canadian financial news portal containing financial data as well as user generated content. In particular, the Bullboards message board is billed as “Canada's largest community of active investors” and can be searched by stock symbol to gain very valuable insight on publicly-traded companies.

- **Yahoo Finance Canada** - ca.finance.yahoo.com/

More comprehensive information on public companies and various industries; view company profiles, key financial statistics, competitors, analysts’ opinions, and news.

Subscription-based (or for fee) Directories

The most commonly used fee-based corporate directories are listed below. Some are particularly useful if your employer has any operations in the United States, but most are always worth checking. Contact the CNO to get assistance with a search.

- **D&B Canada** (formerly Dun & Bradstreet)– www.dnb.ca

D&B Canada is the Canadian operation of D&B, one of the leading credit-rating companies, i.e., it collects information on how quickly firms pay their bills and sells that information to other companies who want to know their customers’ credit ratings. While collecting credit data, D&B gathers descriptive information on almost 1.5 million Canadian companies, including tiny privately-held firms. While the data in D&B’s databases cannot be regarded as absolutely trustworthy (because companies face no penalties if they lie to D&B), it is however often the only source of information (beyond what you’ll find in the provincial or federal corporate filings) for small, private firms. Reports are expensive (full reports are well over \$100) and you have no way of knowing how much information a report will actually contain before purchasing it. Don’t purchase reports for public companies, as there are better sources of free information.

- **Hoovers** - www.hoovers.com

Hoovers is part of D&B, but it maintains a different database that is one of the most useful places to begin when trying to get a basic picture of a company. Most of the

companies are publicly traded but it does report on larger privately-held corporations as well. Expect to find the following information:

- name, address, phone
 - ticker symbol and stock price chart
 - data on revenues, profits and number of employees
 - brief overview of history, operations and reputation
 - links to recent news stories and company press releases
 - names of top executives
 - top competitors
- **LexisNexis** – www.lexisnexis.com

LexisNexis is an extensive database of legal documents and archives from a large number of news sources, periodicals and other publications. It also consolidates a number of other databases to allow for comprehensive searches. It is a great resource, but is expensive to use and requires some training to use effectively.

- **Mergent Online** - www.mergentonline.com

Excellent for public companies, Mergent is good place to get lists of shareholders and detailed financial data and reports.

Newspapers and Archives

News releases and articles in newspapers and periodicals can be a rich source of information on your target. A good way to start your news research is through a search engine such as **Google**. Instead of just typing in the employer's name into Google, make your search more efficient:

- Use “quotes” around the company name to get an exact match
- Use – (minus sign) before a word to exclude this word (ex. Biltrite –American to exclude results for the company called American Biltrite)
- Once you have typed in the best search words, click the **News** button at the top of the page to obtain only news items
- To get the most recent news articles, choose preferred time period from menu on right side

Once you have searched for News using this technique, you could also see if your target is mentioned in any blogs, by selecting **More** from the top menu and scrolling down to select **Blogs**.

Other good sources of news on the web include:

- **Newslink for Canada** - newslink.org/nonusn.html

Links to Canada's largest newspapers as well as alternative press and local newspapers.

- **Canadian Broadcasting Corporation** - www.cbc.ca
- **Canada.com** - www.canada.com

Broad coverage of Canadian news.

- **Canada Newswire** - www.newswire.ca.
- **Toronto Star** - www.thestar.com
- **Financial Post** – www.financialpost.com/
- **The National Post** – www.nationalpost.com/
- **The Globe and Mail** – www.theglobeandmail.com/
- **Newspapers Online** – www.newspapers.com
- **News Library** – www.newslibrary.com/
- **Google News Archives** – news.google.com/archivesearch
- **Yahoo Newspapers** – dir.yahoo.com/News_and_Media/Newspapers/
- **Financial Press:**
 - The Wall Street Journal – online.wsj.com/public/us
 - The Financial Times – www.ft.com
 - Fortune (CNN Money) – www.fortune.com

Activist News and Research Sources

In addition to traditional news sources, several sites with a more activist bent can be tremendously useful in digging up information on corporate employers and devising campaign strategies.

Some good ones include:

- **Independent Media Center** – www.indymedia.org

“A collective of independent media organizations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage. Indymedia is a democratic media outlet for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of truth.” (from indymedia.org)

- **CorpWatch** - www.corpwatch.org
- **Dirt Diggers Digest** - dirtiggersdigest.org/

- **Corporate Research Project** - www.corp-research.org/

This site contains a great section on “[How to do Corporate Research](#)”, which although geared to US researchers, contains a wealth of helpful information and links.

- **Crocodyl** -- www.crocodyl.org/

A collaborative research site administered by the activists from CorpWatch and others to help campaigners share strategic research on corporations.

Industry Specific:

- **Mining Watch Canada** -- www.miningwatch.ca/

Essential for research on Canadian mining companies. Allows you to search by employer name.

Industry Resources

In addition to consulting the financial press, there are good sources of industry information in Canada.

Industry Canada

www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ic1.nsf/eng/home

Through this site, you can access industry profiles and lists of Canadian companies in the relevant industries (which is useful in identifying competitors, suppliers and customers). All you have to do is go to the search tab from the home page.

The Canadian Industry Statistics Page (CIS) of the Industry Canada site - www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cis-sic.nsf/eng/Home is the place to find NAICS codes for your target company. Once you have the appropriate code, you can find other companies who share that code in order to locate competitors.

Industry Publications

Industry Publications are a valuable tool to help you to learn more about the industry in question. Publications can be in the form of magazines, newspapers, or newsletters, and often contain a great deal of information about the industry.

Many of the following sites provide both free and paid-subscription information covering either groups of industries or specific industries where USW has high levels of representation.

- IndustryLink Directory – www.industrylink.com
 - This web site provides links to sites categorized by industry.
- Yahoo Metal and Mining News – biz.yahoo.com/n/y/y0023.html
- American Aluminum Association – www.aluminum.org/
- American Health Care Association – www.ahca.org/
- American Iron and Steel Institute – www.steel.org/
- American Metal Market – www.amm.com/
- Brick Industry of America Trade Association – www.bia.org
- Chemical Week Magazine – www.chemweek.com
- Copper Development Association – www.copper.org/
- Flat Glass and Auto Glass – www.glasslinks.com
- Mining News – www.miningnews.net/
- Paper Online – www.paperonline.org/
- Rubber and Plastic News – www.rubbernews.com/subscriber/headlines.phtml
- Tire Business Magazine – www.tirebusiness.com
- U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Information – minerals.er.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/mcs/

If you find industry publications that require passwords, check with the National Office as we maintain subscriptions to many industry publications, either directly or through Pittsburgh, and may be able to provide access.

Other Industry Sources

Other sources that may be useful for industry research are:

- **Industry Portal** – www.virtualpet.com/industry/mfg/mfg.htm (US)
- **Merx** – For the most complete listing of public tenders in Canada – www.merx.com/English/Nonmember.asp?WCE=Show&TAB=1&PORTAL=MERX&State=1&hcode=SgbREnHhjXN%2fEwVH2mi7ow%3d%3d
- **Public Works and Government Services of Canada**– The Canadian government discloses all contracts over \$10,000, listed here – www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/cgi-bin/proactive/cl.pl?lang=eng&SCR=Q&Sort=0
- **The Thomas Register** – Allows you to search for suppliers by products, as well as by company name – www.thomasnet.com/
- **Trade Data Online** – Also on the Industry Canada site, provides information and reports on the trade of goods with over 200 countries, by product, or by industry code – www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/tdo-dcd.nsf/eng/Home

- **Statistics Canada** – An extremely valuable resource for statistical information on industry, labour markets, comparative data on wages and benefits and more. Many reports are free, but CANSIM (Statistics Canada's key socioeconomic database) charges variable fees depending on the size and type of report ordered.
– www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html

Canadian Certifications and Collective Agreements

Below is a list of websites from which you can access labour board decisions and contracts:

- Oracle – USW contracts from both Canada and the United States. An account is required (Contact CNO).
- Negotech – www.hrsdc.gc.ca/cgi-bin/search/negotech/search-eng.shtml
 - This free source is a database of Canadian contracts, both from federal and provincial jurisdictions. Always worth checking, but especially useful for finding collective agreements in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario which do not otherwise provide online access to their collective agreements.
- CanLII – www.canlii.org/en/index.php
 - National database of legal decisions, including labour board decisions.
- British Columbia – www.lrb.bc.ca/ or www.lrb.bc.ca/cas/
- Alberta – www.alrb.gov.ab.ca/ or www.alrb.gov.ab.ca/collectiveagreements.html
- Saskatchewan – www.sasklabourrelationsboard.com/ (no contracts)
- Manitoba – www.gov.mb.ca/labour/labbrd/index.html (no contracts)
- Ontario – www.olrb.gov.on.ca/english/homepage.htm
 - Contracts are available for a fee: Phone 416-326-1260 or email cbis@ontario.ca to request a copy of a collective agreement.
- Quebec – www.travail.gouv.qc.ca/ - click on “Corail” on the right side.
<https://www.corail.gouv.qc.ca/abonnement/acceder.do> - free service, need to register.
- New Brunswick – 198.164.125.15/cars/
- Nova Scotia – www.gov.ns.ca/lwd/databases/ or <https://info.enla.gov.ns.ca/agreements/>
- Prince Edward Island –
 - LRB – <http://www.gov.pe.ca/labour/index.php3?number=1006679&lang=E>
 - Agreements – www.gov.pe.ca/sss/index.php3?number=1024048&lang=E
- Newfoundland/Labrador – <http://www.gov.nl.ca/lra/index.html> or labourcairs.gov.nl.ca/TOC.aspx
- Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut – see Negotech above, as these territories fall under federal jurisdiction.

If a US agreement is sought and not USW-certified, the International Office has access to an AFL-CIO database (contact Chuck Durst) on US certifications.

Legal, Regulatory and Community Resources

Legal

- CanLII – www.canlii.org/en/index.php
National database of legal decisions, including labour board decisions. This fantastic resource is managed by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada with the goal of making Canadian law accessible for free on the Internet. Allows you to search most provincial and federal courts and boards simultaneously. Check the scope of database to ensure that the time period you are interested is included in the database.

Bankruptcy and Insolvency and CCAA Records

The Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada maintains a comprehensive fee-based database of bankruptcy and insolvency records (filed pursuant to the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act or BIA*) and a free database of CCAA records. Under the CCAA, the court will appoint a monitor (often an accounting firm) who is responsible for posting all the documents related to the proceedings on its website.

Note: the BIA and CCAA both provide credit restructuring regimes for those who can no longer pay their debts as they become due. The BIA is open to any legal person, including individuals, corporations and various other types of business organizations. It provides a detailed legislative framework for reorganization. The CCAA is only available to corporations whose debts exceed \$5 million. It is considered far more flexible than the BIA in the types of restructuring it allows, but can be significantly more costly.

- **Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada –**
www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/bsf-osb.nsf/eng/home - Registration (free) is required to search the database. Bankruptcy and insolvency records are available for a fee, currently \$8 per set of 10 records found, including “no matches found”. This means you might pay the minimum fee of \$8 only to find there are no bankruptcy records to view. To maximize your chances of finding valuable information, ensure that you enter the company’s legal name correctly. Also, be sure to supplement with a general Google search of the company name + bankruptcy and/or + insolvency.
- **CCAA Records -** www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/bsf-osb.nsf/eng/h_br02281.html
The Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy in Canada also provides a free searchable database of all companies that have been granted relief under the CCAA since September 18, 2009. You can choose to view an alphabetical or chronological listing. To view the actual documents filed with the court as part of the proceedings,

you will be referred to the monitor's website. For proceedings prior to September 18, 2009, do a general Google search of the company name +CCAA.

Regulatory (Environmental)

- [Ontario Environmental Registry](http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/) (www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/)

Search for environmental permits, licenses and revocations for any employer in Ontario from the basic search page or use the advanced search function.

- [Canadian Environmental Protection Act Registry](http://www.ec.gc.ca/lcpe-cepa/default.asp?lang=En&n=D44ED61E-1)
(www.ec.gc.ca/lcpe-cepa/default.asp?lang=En&n=D44ED61E-1)

You can use the search function near the bottom left of the page. Allows you to find permits and revocations.

- [Canadian Environmental Assessment Registry](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/050/index-eng.cfm) (www.ceaa.gc.ca/050/index-eng.cfm)

This Registry provides access to information and records about environmental assessments that are being conducted under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

- [Provincial and Territorial Ministries of the Environment and other Environment-related sites](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=223FBFDB-1) (www.ceaa.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=223FBFDB-1)

Useful page with links to provincial and territorial websites dedicated to environmental regulation.

See also [Blue-Green Canada](http://www.usw.ca/union/blue-green) (www.usw.ca/union/blue-green) and [Blue-Green Alliance](http://www.bluegreenalliance.org) (US) (www.bluegreenalliance.org).

Community/Political/Labour

- [Provincial and Territorial Ministries of Labour](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/labour/employment_standards/ministries.shtml)
(http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/labour/employment_standards/ministries.shtml)

Link to any province's or territory's Ministry of Labour site from this handy link page provided by HRSDC.

- [Ontario Federation of Labour Links](http://ofl.ca/index.php/links/)
(<http://ofl.ca/index.php/links/>)

A great list of links to numerous labour, community and political organizations that could be useful in building alliances for a campaign.

- [Federations and Labour Councils in Canada](http://www.canadianlabour.ca/home/links)
(<http://www.canadianlabour.ca/home/links>)

List of links to labour organizations maintained by the Canadian Labour Congress.

Global Union Federations- www.global-unions.org

See the “About Us” section of the site for links to the member organizations, who are the following global union federations.

- International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF)
- International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation (ITGLWF)
- Education International (EI)
- Public Services International (PSI)
- UNI Global Union (UNI)
- The Building and Woodworkers International (BWI)
- International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF)
- International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine & General Workers’ Unions (ICEM)
- International Metalworkers’ Federation (IMF)
- International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)
- International Arts and Entertainment Alliance (IAEA)
- Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC)
- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

The USW in Canada is active in the [IMF](#), [ICEM](#) (the IMF and ICEM are working on a merger with the ITGLWF to form a single global union federation), and [BWI](#).

USW Alliances - www.usw.ca/union/partners

- Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists (ACTRA)

- [Blue-Green Canada \(www.usw.ca/union/blue-green\)](http://www.usw.ca/union/blue-green) (a partnership with [Environmental Defence \(http://www.bluegreencanada.ca\)](http://www.bluegreencanada.ca) in Canada)
- Communications Workers of America (CWA/SCA)
- Independent Workers Association (iWorkers)
- Los Mineros –the USW formed an alliance with the National Miners’ and Metalworkers’ Union of Mexico (SNTMMSRM), known as Los Mineros, and is working with the Mexican union towards formalizing a unified North American trade union.
- Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU)
- Workers Uniting – The USW’s alliance with Unite (www.unitetheunion.org), the largest union in the UK, Workers Uniting brings together 3 million members in Canada, the US and the UK (www.usw.ca/union/uniting).

SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES FOR THE CAMPAIGN

Social media allows for instantaneous distribution of information to many parties simultaneously. When used properly, it can be a very effective tool for a campaign. Here is a brief summary of the social media outlets you might consider using. For more information on using social media or devising a social media strategy for a campaign, contact the Strategic Campaigns Department at the CNO.

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com

LinkedIn has publicly-accessible information about major employers. The company profiles often offer statistical information about corporate employees, including gender composition, common job titles, most common alma mater of corporate employees, and other interesting information.

Search for employers on LinkedIn on this page: www.linkedin.com/companies

Facebook

www.facebook.com

Facebook is a social media site that many companies are now taking advantage of. You will often find that a company/organization has a Facebook page. This may help in developing important connections to use within your strategy.

You can also use Facebook to help mobilize members and supporters. By creating events you can inform people about how they can get involved. Creating a separate page for the specific campaign will allow you to instantly update those interested on news within the campaign.

Twitter

www.twitter.com

Twitter is a revolution that is sweeping the socialverse. It allows you to post short status updates that are visible to anyone on the internet. This is helpful within a campaign to get a message out to followers as well as post important news occurrences.

Both Facebook and Twitter are reliant on people following. It is important to start a social media campaign involving these two forms early, to be able to gauge how successful they may be in communicating information.

Blogging

Blogging is an early form of social media. It is a crossover between the press and easily accessible social media forms. The key to having a successful blogging strategy is to choose sites that you know will be sympathetic to your campaign. The following is a list of blogs and sites that could be considered:

- Rabble (www.rabble.ca)
- Progressive Economics (www.progressive-economics.ca)
- Huffington Post (US) (www.huffingtonpost.com)
- Torontoist (www.torontoist.com)
- BlogTO (www.blogto.com)
- Progressive Bloggers (www.progressivebloggers.ca)
- Framed in Canada (www.framedincanada.com)
- This Magazine (www.this.org/) – while it is only published biweekly, it is a good way to get the story out there if planned ahead – also good for commenting in a forum style)
- Creative Unions (www.creativeunions.org)

Forums

Forums predate other social media forms. However, they can still be a good source in raising discussion and awareness about the campaign you are running. Many communities and news sites have forums. Here is an example:

- Babble (www.rabble.ca/babble/)

YouTube

www.youtube.com

YouTube is a great resource for generating visual interest by posting and viewing videos. If you are posting a video, it is important to make sure it is seen. There are a few different ways to do this:

- Post it multiple times with different titles. Try to think of keyword searches you would do. This will help reach a larger number of internet surfers.
- Keep it short! Attention spans have shortened as people are constantly multi-tasking and are always moving on to something else. An effective video should be no longer than 4 minutes maximum.
- Visual appeal – make sure the video flows well.

Flickr

www.flickr.com

Flickr is another visual interest tool within social media. Through this site, you can post photos and create galleries to generate interest about your campaign.

The great thing about YouTube and Flickr is that people can also post comments on your videos and pictures. So you will not only be able to generate interest and raise awareness, but you will also cause discussion about the situation.

APPENDIX A - BUILDING POWER

One of the union's strongest and most useful programs in planning and implementing a strategic campaign is Building Power. Building Power describes 10 steps to a successful contract campaign. More important than any of the individual steps is the message of **member involvement**.

Members and member involvement create the power referred to in the Building Power course. Successful campaigns are built on the input and participation of the workers who are directly affected by the employer's actions and decisions. When organized and informed, workers become a powerful force in any campaign.

The key to building power is sharing information with and among members. Keeping members in the loop and involving them in gathering and disseminating information ensures everyone knows what the important issues are and become committed to overcoming struggles and achieving the goals of the campaign. See Appendix B for more on talking to workers to get information when developing a campaign.

The Building Power manual and resource CD is available in full from the USW National Office's Education and Strategic Campaigns Department (416-487-1571 or email aeshelman@usw.ca).

The course is divided into the 10 steps to "taking the offensive and winning a better contract", which are briefly summarized here:

1. Form a solid Communication & Action Team (CAT)
 - The CAT will take the lead on the implementation of the campaign
 - CAT members are recruited through one-on-one contacts with members
2. Analyze strengths and weaknesses (not only the employer's, but also the local's)
 - understand how to use the local's strengths to pressure the employer,
 - transform the local's weaknesses into strengths, and
 - pressure the employer by exploiting its weaknesses (see chart reproduced below)
3. Identify issues and determine the union's goals and issues for the contract campaign
 - Conduct a confidential membership survey to develop a list of issues
 - Prioritize issues based on which issues are widely felt, deeply felt and potentially winnable
 - Turn issues into goals, i.e., make the union's issues or problems worth fighting for

- Good goals win concrete improvements for the membership, build the union by getting folks to fight for something together and alter the relation of power by making the union stronger
- 4. Create a campaign theme (name the campaign in a way that says who you are, and why you are doing what you are doing)
 - Make it concise, active and positive
 - Repeat that theme in all publications
 - Focus on human rights like dignity, justice, health & safety rather than narrow economic issues
- 5. Develop campaign messages in support of that theme
 - Like the theme, messages need to be consistent, compact and positive
 - Determine your audience, subject and purpose
 - First purpose is always to update the membership through regular bargaining updates
- 6. Identify and approach allies
 - Other persons or groups who share an interest in your campaign goals, like other unions, community groups, environmentalists
 - Most important allies are other unions within the same company or organization (for large, multi-national employers, see the section on global union federations for information on reaching out to unions around the world)
 - Key to building powerful relationships is to develop a long-term, mutually beneficial association (be willing and available to help your ally when asked)
- 7. Find potential leverage targets
 - A direct target is usually the one person who has the power to grant your demands and settle the contract (usually the CEO)
 - An indirect target has influence over the direct target and may not always be an adversary
 - Identify an employer's leverage targets by studying its key relationship (see spider diagram earlier in this guide)
 - Assess potential leverage targets by looking at their strengths and weaknesses (like you did in step 2) and determining:
 - How easy it would be for the union to impact the target
 - Whether membership involvement will be able to impact the target
 - Whether focusing on a particular target will build the union
- 8. Employ unique strategies and tactics to use leverage target to help you pressure the employer to grant your demands
 - Strategies are overall plans to accomplish goals
 - Tactics are specific activities done along the way to reach your goals
 - Since each campaign is unique, each campaign strategy must be unique as well in order to surprise the leverage target

- Coming up with appropriate strategies and targets brings your work in most of the previous steps together: remember the strengths and weaknesses of your employer and of your local (step 2), the strengths and weaknesses of the leverage target (step 7), your CAT (step 1), your issues and goals (step 3), your campaign theme (step 4) and your possible allies (step 6)
 - Good tactics involve union members
9. Design your campaign calendar
- Set up a timeline for escalating actions
 - Every time you have an action, the pressure increases and the impact on the employer is greater
10. Evaluate and adjust strategies and tactics
- Continuously evaluate your campaign and how your employer reacts to the various strategies and tactics you use
 - Consider alternatives to striking (the continuing threat of a strike often puts greater pressure on the employer than an actual strike)

Strengths and Weaknesses Chart (Steps 2 & 7)

The Building Power course provides a very useful chart for identifying an employer's or a target's strengths and weaknesses.

By reviewing this chart prior to beginning your research, you will get a good sense of where to focus your efforts to gather useful information. And filling out this chart using the information you have gathered will help determine where to apply pressure to the best effect.

Category	Weakness			Strength	
Quality of Top Management within your workplace	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Top Management in your company or organization– <i>not just your facility</i> (i.e. CEO, President of HR...)	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Mid-level and Floor-level Management	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to effectively shift production from USW facility(ies) to other facility(ies)	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to operate the facility(ies) for a long period of time without experienced USW workforce	1	2	3	4	5
Can your customers easily find alternate suppliers?	1	2	3	4	5
Credibility of management with employees.	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to create significant levels of product inventory	1	2	3	4	5
Overall financial condition	1	2	3	4	5
Image in the community	1	2	3	4	5
Image with investors (i.e. Wall Street or Bay Street)	1	2	3	4	5
Relationship with the Union	1	2	3	4	5
Condition of facilities (investment in new equipment). Level of Automation.	1	2	3	4	5
Other:	1	2	3	4	5
Other:	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B – TALKING TO WORKERS

As stated earlier in this guide, workers are an invaluable source of information on their own employers. Talking to workers is possibly the most important tool we have in gathering information about an employer. The members who are at the employer's facility every day will have insight and information that is difficult, if not impossible to find elsewhere, especially in the case of private companies. It is crucial that you talk to members as early on in the process as possible.

Workers should be thoroughly interviewed about the plant operations, their own connections to the employer, and the community.

Here are some sample questions to ask when interviewing workers.¹

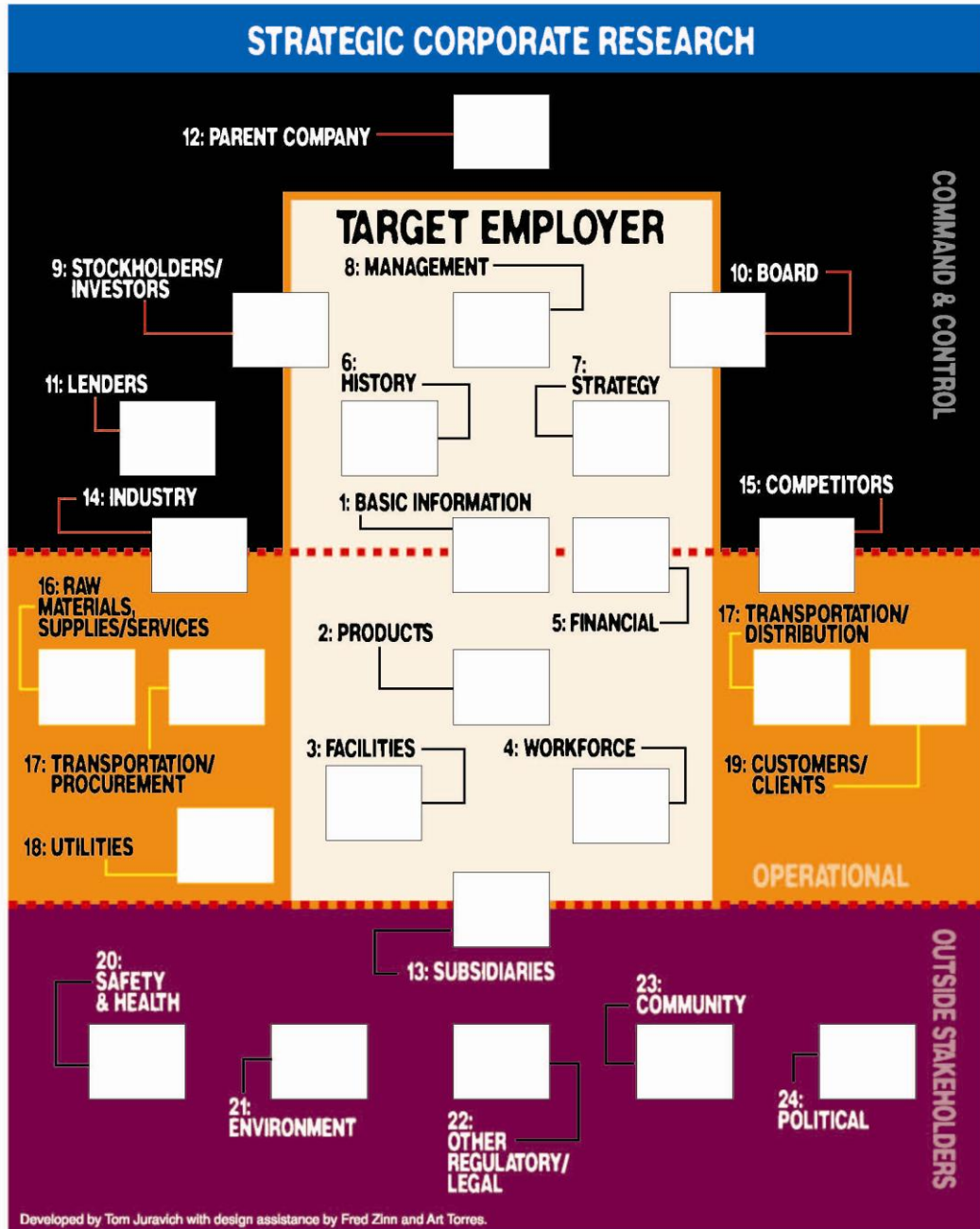
1. Describe how the plant works.
 - a. What does everyone do? Describe the members' various occupations.
 - b. How important are the members' skills in ensuring the plant's operation? (trying to assess employer's ability to operate the facility without the experienced USW workforce)
 - c. What machinery is in the plant?
 - d. What is the most important piece of equipment in the plant?
 - e. How much of the production process is automated?
 - f. What condition is the facility in? Has the company invested in new equipment in the recent past?
 - g. Does the company have other locations? Can those locations make the same products that are made here?
2. What comes in?
 - a. Who supplies the raw materials?
 - b. If the raw materials are packaged, do they have labels or logos on them? (helpful in identifying suppliers)
 - c. How do the materials arrive at the plant? (truck, train, ship, etc.)
 - d. Does the employer use shipping companies to deliver the raw materials? If so, which ones?

¹ This list of questions was adapted from Kate Bronfenbrenner's presentation entitled Turn the Computer Off (or what to do before you ever turn it on), Strategic Corporate Research Summer School, June 12-17, 2011. It also draws on the Building Power Strengths and Weaknesses chart to identify.

3. What goes out?
 - a. What products are made at the plant?
 - b. What is the main or most important product?
 - c. What brand names are put on the products?
 - d. Where do the finished products get shipped to? (i.e., who are the employer's main customers?)
 - e. Does the company use shipping companies to deliver its finished products? If so, which ones?
 - f. Are you aware of other plants that make the same products? Are those plants unionized?
 - g. How are waste products disposed of?
 - h. How is garbage taken out of the workplace?
4. Who knows what?
 - a. Who has worked there a long time?
 - b. Who is closest to the boss?
5. Give a brief history of the company.
 - a. Have there been any recent changes in management?
 - b. Are there any internal politics that you are aware of?
 - c. Have you noticed any unusual activities, visitors, or meetings recently?
6. Talk about the top managers and owner(s), if known.
 - a. What are their names?
 - b. Where do they live? (Get addresses and phone numbers)
 - c. Do you know anything about their lives? Do they have families? Are they involved in the community?
7. Talk about the employer's relationship with the union.
 - a. How has the local's relationship with the employer been in the past?
 - b. Have there been any recent changes to the relationship with the local?
8. What do you know about the company's financial position?
 - a. Does anyone have access to business plans or other documents talking about the employer's strategies and goals for the coming year(s)?
 - b. Does anyone have financial statements for the company (private employers especially)?

- c. In the case of a private employer, do you know who the owner is? Does the owner come to the workplace (i.e., is he or she involved in the business?)
 - d. Are you aware of the company's relationship with any investors, banks, or other lenders?
- 9. What is the company's image in the community?
 - a. Does the company contribute to charity, sponsor sports teams or participate in the United Way or other community organizations?
 - b. Does the company have any relationships within the community that you are aware of? (Charitable boards, partnerships with community organizations or other businesses)
 - c. Does the company have any political connections you are aware of?
 - d. Are you aware of any environmental concerns at the plant?
 - e. What government inspectors visit the plant (environmental, health & safety, etc.)? How are those inspections handled?
 - f. Is the company being sued? Any recent lawsuits you are aware of?

APPENDIX C: Strategic Corporate Research Chart



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