

# Research firms can tell you about the competition

Information is knowledge, especially when the information relates to the competition. But many small-business owners complain that getting "good" competitive data is difficult and takes time away from their business.

"Because the overwhelming majority of our nation's small businesses are privately owned, company documents such as annual reports and SEC filings are not required by law. So you can't just write your competitors and expect them to send you statements of how well they've done during the past year and which product lines are selling well."

small, it may not be represented by a professional association or trade publication that compiles and makes available industry statistics to its member and non-member communities.

BUT ALL is not lost. Information and marketing research firms often can help when secondary data search or competitor inquiries fail to provide the sought-after results.

Peggy Koenig, manager of marketing communications at FIND/SVP, a New York-based information and market research company, said firms like hers know where to look. "We have immediate access to



## focus: small business

Mary DiPaolo

10,000 company files and the same number of subject files. We subscribe to 2,000 periodicals and 1,500 on-line data bases. We produce over 30 syndicated research reports each year, and we have specialty groups that monitor competitive activity across six major industries on a reg-

ular basis."

ACCORDING TO Koenig, there hasn't been a question asked yet that FIND/SVP hasn't been able to answer.

"When you're in the information business, you have to be on top of

what's going on all the time."

Subjects of syndicated research reports produced in 1988 include the health-care industry, the industrial adhesives industry and the fresh pasta market.

"Competitive profiles are a big part of all of our reports and present valuable sales and financial data as well as forecasts. These reports average 250-300 pages in length and are available through our catalog for \$795 to \$1,795."

FOR THE client who requires an ongoing source of industry-related or competitive data, information and market research companies often

provide this service on a monthly retainer basis.

"Clients pay \$400 per month for current information whenever they need it, with the majority spending about \$115 from that amount each month," Koenig said.

Considering that many on-line data base searches cost \$100 per hour, this service can be worth the investment for some business owners.

For more information about FIND/SVP or to request a copy of its client services and reports catalog, call Koenig at 212-463-6227.

## datebook

● **ASK A CPA**  
Thursday, Feb. 23, Saturday, Feb. 25 — Ask a CPA Call-In Day. Call 855-2288 5:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Sponsor: Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants.

● **COMMERCIAL INVESTORS**  
Thursday, Feb. 23 — Commercial investment division of South Oakland County Board of Realtors meets. Information: 585-1283.

● **PERSONNEL CONSULTANTS**  
Thursday, Feb. 23 — Certified personnel consultants honored in Birmingham. Information: 557-0556. Sponsor: Michigan Association of Personnel Consultants.

● **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**  
Friday, Feb. 24 — Seminar on IRS Section 89 offered 8 a.m. to noon in Troy. Fee: \$50. Information: 362-2120. Sponsor: FlexBen Corp.

● **VETERANS BUSINESS CONFERENCE**  
Saturday, Feb. 25 — Veterans business conference at Oakland University in Rochester. Fee: \$25. Information: 226-7240.

● **ANNUITIES AND YOU**  
Saturday, Feb. 25 — "How Annuities Can Work for You" begins at 10:30 a.m. in Rochester. Free. Information: 652-8990. Sponsor: Merrill Lynch.

● **CALCULATORS AND FINANCIAL PLANNING**  
Saturdays, Feb. 25 through March 4 — "Using the HP-12C Calculator in Personal Financial Planning" offered 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Rochester. Fee: \$75. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

● **GRE WORKSHOPS**  
Saturdays, Feb. 25 through April 1 — Workshops in preparation for graduate record examination offered 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Rochester. Fee: \$125. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

● **FRENCH-AMERICAN CHAMBER**  
Monday, Feb. 27 — French-American Chamber of Commerce meets. Information: 964-4000, Ext. 249.

● **WOMEN ACCOUNTANTS**  
Tuesday, Feb. 28 — American Society of Women Accountants meets in Southfield. Information: Flora La Douceur, 268-3285.

● **PLAN WITH STORYBOARDS**  
Tuesday, Feb. 28 — "Storyboarding: a creative planning process" offered 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Rochester. Fee: \$95. Information: 370-3033. Sponsor: Oakland University continuing center.

● **BUSINESS PLAN WORKSHOP**  
Wednesday, March 1 — "In Preparation for the Money People, How to Prepare the Winning Business Plan" offered 8:30 a.m. to noon in Southfield. Fee: \$35. Information: 557-2141. Sponsor: Metro Business Management Associates.

● **MANAGEMENT SCIENCE**  
Wednesday, March 1 — Open house 6-8 p.m. in Troy about master of science in management program. Information: 689-8282. Sponsor: Walsh College.

● **DIRECT MARKETERS**  
Thursday, March 2 — Direct Marketing Association of Detroit meets in Southfield. Information: 258-8803.

● **MARKETING ASSOCIATION**  
Friday, March 3 — American Marketing Association meets in Southfield. Information: Kay Bonnici, 569-7095.

● **TEAM BUILDING**  
Mondays, March 6 through April 10 — Building for Success Managers course offered 8:30-9:30 p.m. in Southfield. Fee: \$175. Information: Brenda Vesprini, 540-1511. Sponsor: Oakland Community College.

● **ALTERNATIVE FINANCING**  
Tuesday, March 7 — "When the Bank Says No, Alternative Finance-

ing for Your Business" offered 8:30 a.m. to noon in Southfield. Fee: \$35. Information: 557-2141. Sponsor: Metro Business Management Associates.

● **PRESENTATIONS**  
Tuesday, March 7 through April 11 — "How to Deliver Winning Presentations" offered 6:30-9:30 p.m. in Southfield. Fee: \$175. Information: 552-2600. Sponsor: Oakland Community College.

● **REAL ESTATE WOMEN**  
Wednesday, March 8 — Commercial Real Estate Women meet in Southfield. Information: Vicki Dallas, 652-6560.

● **BUSINESS COMMUNICATORS**  
Wednesday, March 8 — International Association of Business Communicators meets in Southfield. Information: Nancy Skidmore, 544-8516.

● **TRAINING SOCIETY**  
Wednesday, March 8 — American Society for Training and Development meets in Troy. Information: 258-8823.

● **FUTURE OF INVESTING**  
Thursday, March 9 — "How Will the Bush Administration and Tax Reform Change Your Investment Strategy?" begins at 7:30 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. Fee: \$10. Information: 645-3635. Sponsor: Cranbrook Schools.

● **SUCCESS STRATEGIES**  
Mondays, April 10, 17 — Headline of West Bloomfield will present a class on "Strategies of Success" at 7 p.m. both days. Speakers will be Farm Eldred, Miss America of 1970 and a licensed cosmetologist, and Grace Scallia, owner of Headline Salon. \$40 fee. For information, call 851-7464.

● **FINANCIAL FUNDAMENTALS**  
Wednesdays, March 8 through April 12 — "Fundamentals of finance and Accounting for Non-financial Managers" offered in Southfield. Fee: \$175. Information: 552-2600. Sponsor: Oakland Community College.

● **WHARTON ALUMNI**  
Wednesday, March 15 — Wharton Alumni Association entrepreneurial symposium in Detroit. Information: 473-0817.

● **PURCHASING MANAGEMENT**  
Thursday, March 16 — Purchasing Management Association of Detroit meets in Farmington. Information: 1-773-3737.

● **TOASTMASTERS MEET**  
Thursday, March 16 — Wind Baggers Toastmaster Club meets in Farmington. Information: Cheryl Ellis, 476-2508.

● **ACCOUNTING GAME**  
Friday, March 17 — The Accounting Game seminar ("Learn a semester of accounting in one day") offered 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in Farmington Hills. Fee: \$295. Information: Bev Wagner, 1-517-799-9580. Sponsor: Rehmman Robson & Co.

● **JOB FAIR**  
Friday, March 17 — Collegiate job fair runs 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Farmington Hills. Information: Kay Kazora, 577-3390. Sponsors: Wayne State, Eastern Michigan universities.

● **JOB OPPORTUNITY SEMINAR**  
A free job opportunity seminar for those interested in a new paraprofessional accounting career or in advancing will be held from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Oakland University in Rochester. For a brochure or reservations, call 370-3120 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

● **MARKETING ASSOCIATION**  
Tuesday, March 21 — American Marketing Association meets in Southfield. Information: Kay Bonnici, 569-7095.

● **COMMERCIAL INVESTORS**  
Wednesday, March 22 — Commercial investment division of South Oakland County Board of Realtors meets. Information: 585-1283.

● **SERVICE MANAGEMENT**  
Wednesday, March 22 — Professional Services Management Association meets in Southfield. Information: Barbara Austerberry, 352-8310.

● **JOB FAIR**  
Friday, March 31 — Collegiate job fair runs 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Farmington Hills. Information: Liz Donahue, 577-3390. Sponsors: Wayne State, Eastern Michigan universities.

● **PROGRAMMABLE CONTROLLERS**  
Monday-Thursday, April 3-6 — International Programmable Controllers Conference held in Detroit. Information: Tom Jada, 995-4440.

# HOW MUCH DID YOU LOSE LAST YEAR ON NON-DEDUCTIBLE INTEREST?

## UNLESS YOU ACT QUICKLY, THIS YEAR COULD BE WORSE.

As you know, Congress is steadily phasing out interest deductions on most consumer loans. An exception is a loan secured by your home. Which makes it a great time to apply for a home equity line of credit at First of America Bank.

### Put The Deduction Back In Your Interest.

The Federal tax laws allow you to use your home equity line of credit for any purpose you want. And in most cases, on loans all the way up to \$100,000, you still get to take a 100 percent tax deduction.

You also may pay a lower interest rate along with those lower taxes.

**Take Advantage Of Your Tax Break.** Get your tax break with our home equity line of credit. You can use this line instead of other

loans that are no longer fully tax deductible.

You can also access your credit line simply by writing a check. And the payment schedule is flexible, too.

However, using the equity in your home is not something you should do without careful consideration. Furthermore, there are some items—like normal living expenses, for example—for which a home equity line of credit is definitely not appropriate.

So stop by your nearest First of America office, or call 1-800-544-6155 for more information. We'll provide you with a free information brochure and an application. We'll also help you determine if a home equity line of credit is right for you.

In no time, we can have your good credit working in your favor.

**FIRST OF AMERICA Bank**

Member FDIC. An Equal Housing Lender.

\*Information is based on current Federal tax laws. Consult your tax advisor regarding your personal tax situation.