UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
Business Engagement

DIY Background Research

There are nearly 1.4 million active corporations registered in the state of Georgia (as of March 2023), and about 30 million businesses across the United States. The task of identifying a company that aligns with your research interests may feel overwhelming, but the Office of Business Engagement (OBE)is here to help. If you already have a company in mind (or a company has contacted you about your research and subject matter expertise), please contact the Office of Business Engagement to determine if the company is already engaged with UGA. If the company has been identified as a Strategic Corporate Partner, your OBE contact will help you identify appropriate next steps.

For faculty who subscribe to a "do-it-yourself" mindset and the Six Degrees of Separation concept, here are some tips and resources to support your efforts.

UGA and business news websites: search by company, industry, trends, etc.

The University of Georgia home page search option can provide information on company partnerships that already exist, as well as UGA's involvement in various industries. For example, a search for "Emobility" returns information on the Electric Mobility Summit and a gift from Georgia Power Company to establish a new professorship "to advance research, teaching and public service in the rapidly accelerating field of electric mobility." A search for "Georgia Power Company" returns numerous links to articles and information about UGA's deep and broad relationship with the utility company.

Business publications such as Forbes, Business Insider, BBC, The Economist, and Fast Company provide free access to a broad selection of business reporting. The Wall Street Journal requires a paid subscription to access most of its content, and UGA benefits include access to all employees, free of charge. The more you know about a prospective or current business partner, the better you'll be able to connect the dots between their aspirations and your research interests.

Web search (Google, Bing, DuckDuckGo, etc.)

In addition to links to the company web site, a search engine will often provide links to top news stories and popular search topics related to the company (i.e., "People also ask…"). If the company is active on social media, a web search may provide links to the company's presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. In addition, a variety of web services are available to send news alerts to your email address. You can set these up for specific businesses and industry trends, similar to the Emobility and Georgia Power Company searches mentioned above.

Create a Google Alert (requires a Google account)

1. Go to Google Alerts
2. In the box at the top, enter the companies and industry trends you want to follow
3. To change your settings, click **Show options**. You can change:
    - How often you get notifications
    - The types of sites you will see

- Your language
- The part of the world you want info from
- How many results you want to see
- What accounts get the alert

4. Click **Create Alert**. You will receive emails whenever we find matching search results.

You can set up similar alerts on platforms such as Talkwalker and Mention.net. Both are free services but they require you to set up an account.

Company Website

The company website is an excellent resource, but keep in mind the content is usually focused on the company's primary customer. You may have to dig a little to find information relevant to your research interests.

- The "About Us" page (or its equivalent) may give you a sense of the corporate culture and values.
- A link to "Community Engagement," "Corporate Responsibility," or "Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG)" often includes information about the company's social and philanthropic interests.
- If the company has created a private foundation (e.g., Home Depot Foundation, UPS Foundation), the foundation web pages will be another useful source of information.
- The "Investor Relations" page usually provides details on company headquarters and other significant locations, strategic priorities, financial and annual reports, corporate leadership, board of directors, and latest news releases.

LinkedIn

Faculty who are active on LinkedIn find the platform to be a valuable resource to establish and build relationships with industry partners. Promoting your published papers in a LinkedIn post can stimulate interactions with company representatives who find your research of interest. LinkedIn also makes it easy to search for company employees and UGA alumni who work for the company. To get started:

- Enter the name of the company in the LinkedIn search window.
- The ABOUT page typically provides a company overview, link to the website, primary industry, total number of employees, number of LinkedIn members who are employees), headquarters location, etc.
- The PEOPLE page lists LinkedIn members who indicate the company as their employer, along with:
  - Where they live
  - Where they studied and what they studied (you can conduct a specific search for UGA alumni who list the company as their employer)
  - What they do, and skills they list on their profile
  - How you may be connected on LinkedIn (1st, 2nd, & 3rd+)

- Keep in mind, accuracy of information is limited to what LinkedIn members include in their profile, and how frequently they update their profile.

D&B Hoovers Business Subscription (formerly known as Hoover's Online)

If you want to chase the rabbit even further down the hole, the University System of Georgia subscribes to D&B Hoovers, a "sales acceleration solution that provides a faster path from prospect to profitable relationship by leveraging data and analytics." It can be accessed by signing in through Galileo, the University System of Georgia's virtual library, at no charge to UGA employees.

1. Visit https://www.galileo.usg.edu/ in your web browser
2. Enter University of Georgia in "school or library" window
3. Sign on with your UGA Single Sign On username and password
4. Search for "Hoovers"
5. Under "Databases" click on "Hoover's Online - Business Subscription (Now titled D&B Hoovers)"
6. Enter the company name in the search window
   - The search may bring up several results. For instance, a search for "John Deere" includes its subsidiaries, regional and international branches, etc. Unless you are looking for a regional branch or subsidiary, your best bet is to click on the "parent" organization; in this case, it is "Deere & Company."
   - The "home page" for the company includes a description, list of associated industries, latest news, corporate highlights, a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, top competitors, financial summary, stock snapshot, and key contacts.
   - The lefthand column on the home page is a menu of links to additional details. One of the key links leads to the "Contact Decision Matrix." As the name implies, it can help you identify decision makers who have the authority to evaluate and or approve a financial investment in your research program.
   - Using Deere & Company as an example, the Contact Decision Matrix lists 18 "functional groups." Under "Engineering & Development" there are 89 directors listed (as of March 2023), including 9 under "Research & Development Executives." The individual details include email addresses for 8 of the 9 executives.

NOTE: Company executives are unlikely to respond to a random email from an unknown academic researcher, and university-industry relationships require a long-term commitment. LinkedIn can help you identify people in the company that you are connected to at the 1st or 2nd level. As relationships develop, your LinkedIn connections may be willing and able to introduce you to key decision makers.