

Make the case

Writing a compelling company profile

Business buyers typically have many acquisition choices and only limited time to investigate each prospect. Your company profile often is the first impression potential buyers get of your business, so it must grab their attention. By writing a concise, on-point profile that focuses on your company's best qualities, you can build a compelling case for its purchase, and even increase bid amounts.

Speak with one voice

Once they begin the search for an acquisition target, buyers are likely to have dozens of company profiles cross their desk. So the question is, what actions can you take to ensure that yours stands out?

Although you probably will solicit information and opinions from many different managers in your organization, your profile needs to have a unified voice. A profile that's obviously the product of dozens of contributors — each trying to boost his or her own unit — can make for an unappealing, and confusing, read. Instead, choose only one or a few writers to compile relevant information and write the profile.

A single voice will help ensure that your profile's balanced, but also that it highlights items of greatest interest to prospective buyers. It's also more likely to provide a clear and compelling argument about your company's value.

Use space wisely

Company profiles can contain all kinds of information, depending on a company's industry, specific characteristics and the M&A marketplace. But all profiles should feature:



The basics. Essential background information includes how long your company's been in business, its ownership history and business structure, products or services base and market share.

Financial highlights. Include anywhere from three to five years' worth of financial information that has been distilled to its basics — revenues, assets and debts.

Corporate leadership breakdown. Provide names and brief bios of your key executives, including all of the heads of departments and units, board members and your CEO.

Also leave room for your client or customer list, and an inventory of furniture, fixtures and equipment (FFE) to be included in the sale.

Make a proposition

Perhaps the most important text your profile can include is what is generally known as a "unique selling proposition." Depending on your business, this proposition might be a greater market share, trimmer work force, better product lineup or more valuable customers. Your profile needs to accomplish what the most successful brand advertising campaigns have — selling your audience on the unique value of your company.

Make the case with a clear statement saying that your company does something better than your competition. If you're not quite sure what that superior quality is, ask your M&A advisor to review your company's strengths and distill them into an essential pitch.

Make sure your pitch isn't dry, either. Impart some sense of your company's business culture — what makes it vibrant and capable of growth — by providing details about day-to-day work in your office or production facility and, if your company's involved in community support or has other interesting sponsorships, your external commitments.

Why, what and how

Now isn't the time to go it alone. An effective company profile requires the input and feedback of seasoned M&A advisors. Your advisors can help you craft a profile that's not only easy to read but, more important, sums up your company's core values and how its acquisition would be advantageous.