

## How to Be an Online Spy, and Use What You Find for Sales Success

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People do business with people they like and trust. But in a world where attention spans are short and making a great first impression is imperative, how do you build rapport with a new prospect or client?

*Note: This is a guest post from online marketing research expert Sam Richter, who also happens to be my former boss. Mr. Richter left the President's office here at the Hill Library in January to focus on his new book, Take the Cold out of Cold Calling. Here's a post from Sam's camp on researching people online...*

According to Sam Richter, author of the top-selling book [Take the Cold Out of Cold Calling](#), you start to build relationships by understanding what's important to the other person, their likes and dislikes, and by sharing relevant stories. The good news is with the Internet, it's easy to find information on people you've never met, as long as you know where and how to look.

In a business world where information is power (or if you'd just like to learn a little more about your neighbor), these Web sites offer insights into people, their background, and their interests.

**ZoomInfo.com:** Want an easy way to find an executive's biography? ZoomInfo is a site that scours the Web locating information on people, and then it automatically creates an online biography using the information that it found. To use, Click the People tab, and enter the first and last name of the person you're interested in finding. If the name is a common name (e.g. Pat Smith), use Advanced Search when on the People section, and enter in additional terms like the company where the person works. "ZoomInfo is a site I use prior to meeting with people," said Richter. "In a matter of seconds, I can learn about a person's career and educational history and even some personal information, which allows me to discuss something I know will interest them."

**OpenSecrets.org:** Knowing the political persuasion of a new sales prospect or client can be beneficial. "It can help you know what not to say and so you can avoid putting your foot in your mouth," commented Richter. It can also be critical if you or your client is doing business with the government, or if you're a non-profit organization soliciting a donation. OpenSecrets is your gateway to U.S. political contributions. On the site's top navigation, click the "Who Gives" tab, then select "Donor Lookup." Enter the name of the company or individual you're interested in, and then choose the year or years you'd like to search. If they've made a contribution of more than \$250, it will show up.

**Zillow.com:** If you're selling financial service products, or if you're a non-profit organization that relies on individual donations for your revenue, it can be very beneficial to know the value of a person's home. Just enter an address into the Zillow search form. On the result page, click the address link to find price information and in some markets, a "birds-eye" view of the home and area. Scroll down to locate detailed information including recent sales. Enter the security ID code and get property tax data. "In a general sales presentation or a meeting with a new client, how would you use this information? I have no clue," said Richter with a big smile. "But knowing it is a heck of a lot of fun."

These are just three of the more than 80 people, company, and industry information search tips and resources you'll find in [Take the Cold Out of Cold Calling](#). Whether it's someone's golf handicap, where they donate money or where they volunteer their time, Richter's book gives you step-by-step instructions on how to find information, and how to apply it for sales and business success.

It's no wonder that New York Times #1 bestselling author (Swim with the Sharks) and internationally renowned sales expert Harvey Mackay calls [Take the Cold Out of Cold Calling](#) the "must have resource for anyone involved in sales or business development." To get your copy including a resource CD featuring a research guide, downloadable toolbar, and more, visit [www.takethecold.com/buybook.html](http://www.takethecold.com/buybook.html).

*Note: I've seen Sam present on this topic and the knowledge and strategy he has to impart is impressive. In fact, it's the only business research presentation I've been to where the audience "oohs" and "ahhs." Really, they do... for business research. Anyone in sales or marketing would do well to consider buying this book. This has been the second guest post in our blog building series. For the previous guest post, and for more on the other strategies we've employed, go [here](#).*