

# Preparing to Build Your Sales Budget

Use the following example questions to help you produce an opportunistic, realistic sales forecast.

1. What were your sales last year?
  - What were your company's total sales?
  - What were your sales by division (e.g. construction, grounds maintenance, snow)
  - Refer to your Profit and Loss Statement for actual numbers
  
2. Are you planning to increase your company's sales revenues?
  - Can you hire the right people to achieve the results?
  - Will you need additional equipment?
  - Can you increase sales revenues by increasing price?
  
3. What types of services is your company focusing on?
  - Do you plan on adding/expanding any services?
  - Are you considering eliminating or reducing currently offered services?
  
4. Is your local economy growing, shrinking or expanding?
  - Make sure you consult reliable sources of data/statistics:
    - <http://www.bea.gov/> (US)
    - <http://www.statscan.gc.ca> (Canada)
  
5. Are local unemployment rates increasing or decreasing?
  - <http://www.bls.gov> (US)
  - <http://www.statscan.gc.ca> (Canada)
  
6. What is happening to property values in your local real estate market?
  - <http://www.realtor.com> (US)
  - <http://www.realtor.ca> (Canada)
  
7. What kinds of legislative changes have occurred in the past year that may impact your business, your target market or your industry?
  - What threats do they pose to your current sales numbers?
  - What opportunities do they present for future sales numbers?

8. Will government programs, taxation changes, or incentives help or impede your business?
9. Have any new competitors entered your market?
10. Have any existing competitors left your market?
11. What kinds of trends are having an impact on your industry?
  - Think of trends such as the “green” movement towards greater environmental awareness and how it encouraged customers to change their buying habits and businesses to change their products and services.
  - Are your company’s sales poised to grow or shrink as a result?
12. Have you already signed any new significant contracts for the coming year?
13. Did you lose (or have yet to replace) any significant contracts from the previous year?