Understanding Where You Stand:
A Simple Guide To Your
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Illinois Small Business Development Centers
"Experts, networks, and tools to transform your business"

Illinois Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) provide information, confidential business guidance, training and other resources to early stage and existing small businesses.

Illinois International Trade Centers (ITC) provide information, counseling and training to existing, new to-export companies interested in pursuing international trade opportunities.

Illinois Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC) provide one-on-one counseling, technical information, marketing assistance and training to existing businesses that are interested in selling their products and/or services to local, state, or federal government agencies.

Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Specialty (TIES) ten SBDC locations help Illinois businesses, entrepreneurs and citizens to succeed in a changing economy by: developing the skills of their workers; promoting safe and healthy workplaces; assisting in the commercialization of new technologies; and providing access to modernizing technologies and practices.

**Business Center Locations**

- SBDC
- SBDC/ITC
- SBDC/ITC/PTAC
- SBDC/PTAC
- PTAC
- Technology Services

*See the Northeast Region map on the last page for the Business Center Services in that area.*
INTRODUCTION

One statement cannot diagnose your company’s financial health. Put several statements together and you can make smart financial, investment and management decisions.

Many business owners don’t know how to read their statements and rely on advisors (such as accountants) to tell them the results. Their input is valuable but you need to educate yourself. You must be able to understand your statements so you can:

- realize the vital role money plays in every business decision
- determine if you are making a profit or losing money
- calculate your current and future financial needs:
  - make sure you have positive cash flow for short-term needs
  - make sure your business is growing and will continue to grow

For lending purposes, statements will help you determine:

- if you can afford to pay a loan
- the loan amount
- the loan term (number of years)
- which assets you should buy vs. which assets should be financed
- what collateral is available to secure a loan

WHAT ARE THESE STATEMENTS?

Financial statements are meaningful, written records which allow you to diagnose your financial strengths and weaknesses and increase the life and profitability of your company. Statements are usually prepared annually although the income statement should be developed on a monthly or, at least, a quarterly basis.

WHAT DO THESE STATEMENTS SHOW?

**Balance Sheet**
What a company owns, what it owes, and what is left over.

**Income Statement**
A firm’s sales and expenses plus its profit (or loss).

**Ratios**
Analyze a company’s financial condition. Ratio answers can be compared to others in the same industry.

**Cash Flow Statement**
The sources, uses, and balance of cash, shown on a monthly basis.
BALANCE SHEETS:
BEFORE AND AFTER
FINANCING

Established
companies should
develop two Balance
Sheets - one before,
and one the day after
the loan closes.

New companies
should include an
opening Balance Sheet
in the projections to
reflect what the
balance sheet
will look like the day
after the loan closes.

WHAT DOES A BALANCE SHEET TELL YOU?
This statement shows what you own (assets), what you owe (liabilities), and
what’s left over (net value or equity in the business). The numbers change every
time you receive money or give credit to a client as well as when you pay for or
charge an expense.

Liabilities + Net Worth = Assets
Think of the Balance Sheet like a scale. Assets and liabilities alone are
out of balance until you add capital, the last weight put on the scale, to
makes it balance.

Assets
Assets are divided into two categories: current and
non-current. They are listed according to how liquid
they are (how quickly they can be turned into cash).

Examples of current assets are cash and inventory.
Examples of non-current assets are furniture, fixtures,
property and equipment. Money owed to your
company (accounts receivable) is considered an asset.

Liabilities
Liabilities (debts you owe) are divided into two
categories: current and
non-current (or long-term). They are listed in the order they need to be repaid.

Capital or Net Worth
The business’ equity includes money the owners have invested and income
kept in the business from the company’s profits.

WHAT IT SHOWS YOU
- The net value of the business
- How much of your loan debt is current, and how much is long-term
- Percentages and ratios (which are extracted from the numbers)
  necessary to analyze your business (see Ratios section)
- Compare two of the same time periods to see changes in:
  > cash > accounts payable > accounts receivable
  > equity > inventory > retained earnings

WHAT IT WON’T SHOW YOU:
- Income or expenses over a period of time.
  "Remember, the Balance Sheet reflects one moment in time."
- Market value of assets, although it will reflect purchase costs and
derpreciation according to industry standards
- Quality of assets
- Contingent Liabilities (money you agreed to repay by signing notes,
or by being a co-maker or guarantor of loans).
- Operating Lease obligations (which allow you to buy the item at the end
  of the lease, for a set price, do not appear on the Balance Sheet). However,
  Capital Leases (with buyout price of $1) are shown on the Balance Sheet.

THE Balance Sheet
is a picture of your
business, frozen for a
second in time.

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kept in the business from the company’s profits.
Max Computer Company, Balance Sheet

**ASSETS (WHAT YOU OWN)**

**Current Assets** (converts to cash in one year)
- Cash ........................................... 10,000
- Accounts Receivable ........................ 75,000
- Inventory .................................... 85,000

**Total Current Assets** (10K + 75K + 85K) ........................... 170,000

**Non-Current Assets** (more than one year to convert to cash)
- Fixed Assets (furniture, fixtures, property, equipment) .......... 140,000
- Less Accumulated Depreciation ............................. - 25,000
- Fixed Assets (net, 140K - 25K) ........................... 115,000
- Advances to Owners .................................. 6,000

**Total Non-Current Assets** (115K + 6K) ............................ 121,000

**Total Assets** (170K + 121K) .................................. 291,000

**LIABILITIES (WHAT YOU OWE)**

**Current Liabilities** (due within one year)
- Accounts Payable .................................. 41,000
- Accrued Taxes .................................... 3,000
- Current Portion of Long-Term Debt ......................... 6,000
- Note Payable (due within one year) ........................ 100,000

**Total Current Liabilities** .................................... 150,000

**Long-Term Liabilities** (due for more than one year)
- Loan Payable ..................................... 54,000

**Total Long Term Liabilities** ................................ 54,000

**Total Liabilities** (150K + 54K) ................................. 204,000

**CAPITAL OR NET WORTH** (THE COMPANY’S EQUITY)
- Owners Investment .................................. 20,000
- Retained Earnings (income kept in the business) .............. 67,000

**Total Capital or Net Worth** (67K + 20K) .......................... 87,000

**Total Liabilities & Capital** (204K + 87K) ......................... 291,000

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**WHICH ACCOUNTING METHOD IS RIGHT FOR YOU**

**The Cash Method**
- Records a sale when money is collected
- Records an expense when it is paid

**The Accrual Method**
- Sales are made on credit, and not immediately paid for.
- The amount customers owe is called Accounts Receivable
- Buy items or incur expenses for the business, but pay later.
- The amount owed is called Accounts Payable.
- Net worth does not always translate to cash, since money can be tied up in Accounts Receivable, expenses and inventory. To get a better idea of how much cash there is at the end of the month, learn about the Cash Flow Statement.
- Lenders prefer the accrual method.
Think of the Income Statement as a report card for your business. It is issued from time to time and gives an overview of how you are doing.

What Does an Income Statement Tell You?
In the day-to-day running of your business, numbers fly around at a dizzying pace. Bills are paid, money is taken in, and sometimes, in this whirlwind of activity, it’s hard to know how much you’re actually making. The Income Statement answers that question.

Think of the Income Statement as a kind of report card for your business. Like a report card, it is issued from time to time and gives an overview of how you are doing (for that period of time).

Since this statement reflects your business activity over time (not like the Balance Sheet which is a snapshot of your business for one moment in time), it is usually developed monthly, quarterly and annually. Creating a projected statement for the next 12 months, based on your predictions, is also a good idea.

What It Shows You
- If sales are going up or down
- Your gross profit — how much money is left for the rest of the business after deducting what it costs to produce or purchase the product
- All expenses for the time period it covers
- Increases and decreases in net income
- How much money is left to grow the business
- How much money is left for the owner(s)
- How much money is left to pay debt (principal only)

What It Won’t Show You
- If your overall financial condition is weak or strong (see the Balance Sheet).
- What’s tied up in Accounts Receivable (money owed to you) and Accounts Payable (money you owe).
- What you own (assets) and what you owe (liabilities)
To get a more accurate picture of your financial performance, compare percentages instead of numbers.

- First, convert numbers from the Income Statement into percentages
- Next, compare these percentages from this period to those from the previous period
- Are the percentages increasing or decreasing?

**FOR EXAMPLE**

\[
\frac{\text{Gross Profit of $360,000}}{\text{Total Sales of $900,000}} = 40\%
\]

If gross profit was 35% last year, it has increased by 5%
WHAT DOES A CASH FLOW STATEMENT TELL YOU?
Cash is the fuel that runs your business. Running out of it would be disastrous, so you must have a “cash flow” or money on hand to pay bills and meet day-to-day expenses. Keep in mind that companies can produce a profit, but still not have a positive cash flow.

The Cash Flow Statement shows money that comes into the business, money that goes out and money that is kept on hand to meet daily expenses and emergencies.

WHAT IT SHOWS YOU
- If the business has enough money to:
  - cover day-to-day activities
  - pay debts on time
  - maintain and grow the business without a negative cash flow
- The need for additional working capital (cash) when sales increase since increased sales mean increased purchases of material or labor. You should know how much you need. Show where the additional working capital will come from.
- The maximum loan payment the business can afford
- The breakdown of principal and interest on your loan payments. Note that the Income Statement only shows interest - not principal.
- Your weaknesses (an inability to keep and generate cash). For lending purposes, explain how you’ll handle these weaknesses (via increased sales, cost reductions, or owner’s investments).

WHAT IT WON’T SHOW YOU
- How much you have in Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable (shown in the Balance Sheet)
- Your balances in assets, liabilities and net worth
- Depreciation of equipment, which is a non-cash expense. This is dealt with in the Balance Sheet.

Of Special Interest to New Companies
Losses - also called “pull down balances” - are common in the first year of a start-up. Lenders want to see the business break-even during the year. To produce positive balances, you’ll have to cover months (that show negative balances) with loans, increased revenue, additional owner’s investments, or by reducing expenses.
Loan Principal
Loan principal appears here but not in the Income Statement. If the loan was used for real estate, furniture, fixtures and equipment or machinery, that portion will be depreciated over time (as allowed by the IRS) on the Income Statement.

Loan Payment
Loan received a month before these projections. Purchases are paid, up to date. They are now taking advantage of 30-day payment terms. The Income Statement will record the purchases as an Accounts Payable but it won’t be recorded here until paid.

### A. Cash On Hand (Beginning of month)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>5,627</td>
<td>13,741</td>
<td>10,470</td>
<td>13,830</td>
<td>15,190</td>
<td>11,498</td>
<td>15,202</td>
<td>22,157</td>
<td>30,997</td>
<td>39,372</td>
<td>48,601</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### B. Cash Receipts

1. Cash Sales
2. Collections from Credit Accounts
3. Loan or Other Cash injection (specify)

### C. Total Cash Receipts (B1+B2+B3)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32,813</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>76,250</td>
<td>81,250</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>85,750</td>
<td>88,500</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>88,750</td>
<td>84,250</td>
<td>81,500</td>
<td>78,750</td>
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### D. Total Cash Available (A+C, before cash paid)

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42,813</td>
<td>80,627</td>
<td>89,991</td>
<td>91,720</td>
<td>98,830</td>
<td>100,940</td>
<td>99,998</td>
<td>105,202</td>
<td>110,907</td>
<td>115,247</td>
<td>120,872</td>
<td>127,351</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### E. Cash Paid Out:

1. Purchases (Merchandise)
2. Gross Wages (excludes withdrawals)
3. Reserve and/or Escrow (ex., Pay $100K loan)
4. Other Operating Costs:
   - 1. Other/Miscellaneous Expenses (specify)
   - 2. Gross Wages (excludes withdrawals)
   - 3. Payroll Expenses (Taxes, etc.)
   - 4. Outside Services
   - 5. Supplies (Office and operating)
   - 6. Repairs and maintenance
   - 7. Advertising
   - 8. Car, Delivery and Travel
   - 9. Professional Services (Accounting, legal, etc.)
10. Rent
11. Telephone
12. Utilities
13. Insurance
14. Taxes (real estate, etc.)
15. Interest (on loans)
16. Other/Miscellaneous Expenses (specify)

### F. Other Operating Costs:

1. Loan Principal Payment
2. Capital Purchases (ex., Buy a computer)
3. Other Start-up Costs
4. Reserve and/or Escrow (ex., Pay $100K loan)
5. Owner’s Withdrawal

### G. Total Cash Paid Out (E17 + F1 through F5)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37,186</td>
<td>66,886</td>
<td>79,521</td>
<td>77,890</td>
<td>83,640</td>
<td>89,442</td>
<td>84,796</td>
<td>83,045</td>
<td>79,910</td>
<td>75,875</td>
<td>72,271</td>
<td>70,106</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### H. Cash Position (End of month, D minus G)

<p>| | | | | | | | | | | | | |</p>
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</thead>
</table>

### I. Essential Operating Data (Non-cash flow info)

1. Accounts Receivable (End of month)
2. Bad Debt (End of month, if applicable)
3. Inventory on Hand (End of month)
4. Accounts Payable (End of month)

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**Cash Position**
This company has a positive cash flow.

**Summary**
Good information to calculate.

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**Understanding Where You Stand**
**WHAT RATIOS SHOW YOU?**
Ratios help you identify your strengths and weaknesses. Use them to compare your business to standards in your industry. Lenders look very carefully at ratios.

The numbers for ratios are taken from the Income Statement and the Balance Sheet, but not the Cash Flow Statement.

**LIQUIDITY RATIOS**
How “cash rich” is a company? 
Liquidity ratios show a company’s ability to turn an asset into cash.

**WORKING CAPITAL**
Number Source: Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMULA</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
<td>Shows if a company has enough cash to pay bills. Answer must be positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtract Current Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE TURNOVER</strong></td>
<td>Number Source: Balance Sheet &amp; Income Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable ($75,000 x 365 days)</td>
<td>It takes 30 days to collect bills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$27,375,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$900,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Sales Figure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$27,375,000</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INVENTORY TURNOVER</strong></td>
<td>Number Source: Balance Sheet &amp; Income Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventory Figure ($85,000 x 365 days)</td>
<td>57 days to turnover or sell the inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$31,025,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$540,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Goods Sold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$31,025,000</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT RATIO</strong></td>
<td>Number Source: Balance Sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Current Assets</td>
<td>A company’s short-term debt paying ability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtract Current Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QUICK OR ACID TEST RATIO</strong></td>
<td>Number Source: Balance Sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Current Assets of $170,000</td>
<td>Eliminates inventory from current assets and cash. “Quick” means items can be turned into cash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less Inventory of $85,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$85,000</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Current Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **NOTE:** Shows if a company has enough cash to pay bills. This example shows an excess amount after paying all current liabilities. The answer must be positive. More money is needed to meet expenses if the answer is a negative number. 
**Higher number is better.** |
| **NOTE:** Inventory may become no longer useful. This ratio eliminates inventory from current assets and cash. It’s called “quick” because it includes items that can be turned into cash. 
**Answer should be 1 or higher.** |
| **NOTE:** Tests a company’s short-term debt paying ability. This means there is is $1.13 in cash and current assets available to pay every $1 of current liabilities. 
**The higher the number, the better.** 
**Answer should be 2 or more.** |
DEBT MANAGEMENT RATIOS
Shows how much money owners have invested in the business versus lenders.

LEVERAGE (OR DEBT TO WORTH) RATIO
Number Source: Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMULA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$204,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Determines if a company has enough equity. Lower answers are better. Answer of 3 or lower is preferred.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE TURNOVER
Number Source: Balance Sheet & Income Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMULA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable at $41,000 x 365 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$14,965,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Shows how quickly a company pays its suppliers. Lower numbers (30 days or less) are better.

PROFITABILITY RATIOS
Shows company’s ability to make a profit

PROFIT MARGIN ON SALES
Number Source: Income Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMULA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$53,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.0588</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Shows the percentage of net profit for every dollar of sales. The higher the number, the better. If the profit margin is too low:
1. the prices are too low
2. the cost of goods is too high
3. expenses are too high

CASH FLOW TO CURRENT MaturITIES (DEBT SERVICE) RATIO
Number Source: Balance Sheet & Income Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMULA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Portion of Long Term Debt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$66,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Shows your ability to pay term debts after owner(s) withdrawals. New businesses, use one year’s worth of loan payments. Answer of 2 or more is preferred.

RATIO COMPARISONS
Ratios should be compared to prior years, acceptable lending ranges, and industry averages.

- Industry ratios are averages. Some firms are above and some firms are below these numbers. Differences are due to the age of the company, locations, managers, and operations, to name a few.
- A ratio of 38% compared to an industry average of 39% seems like a small 1% difference. If sales are $4 million, 1% is $40,000. If net profits are $100,000, then the $40,000 is very important.

These reference books include industry information:
- RMA Annual Statement Studies
- Almanac of Business and Industrial Financial Ratios (gathered from U.S. Treasury and IRS information)
- Dunn and Bradstreet

Other good industry sources (especially when your company is smaller than those used in the reference books):
- Trade Associations
- Magazines and newspapers for your industry
- Small Business Administration/SBA

UNDERSTANDING WHERE YOU STAND
**Ability to Pay.** Ability to pay loans from future business’ profits.

**Accounts Payable (A/P).** Expenses incurred from purchases made on credit.

**Accounts Receivable (A/R).** Sales made but money not collected. Credit is granted.

**Assets.** What a company owns.

**Asset-based Lending.** Financing secured by pledging assets (inventory, receivables, or other collateral).

**Available Credit.** The unused portion of a line of credit.

**Balloon.** A stop point or early maturity of a loan.

**Business Credit.** Loans made to businesses in the form of a term loan or a line of credit.

**Business Plan.** An overview of a new or existing company which is used to obtain financing.

**Capacity.** Borrower’s ability to handle a certain level of debt.

**Capital Leases.** Leases with a buyout price of $1 which are shown on the Balance Sheet.

**Commercial Mortgage.** A loan on business’ real estate. Rates and terms are negotiated and the interest rate is usually related to the prime rate.

**Cost of Goods Sold.** Cost to make a product, including materials, labor, and related overhead.

**Credit Rating.** Credit rating as determined by a credit reporting agency.

**Credit Scoring.** A process used to approve or reject commercial loan applications, based on ratios and other factors.

**Current Assets.** Assets that can be converted into cash in one year.

**Current Liabilities.** Liabilities due within one year.

**Depreciation.** Except for land, assets wear out. They are devalued or depreciated every year.

**Draw Down.** Taking an advance on a line of credit.

**Equity.** The book value of a business. Assets minus liabilities.

**Fair Market Value (FMV).** The price of an asset, product or service in a current, competitive market.

**Fixed Assets.** Assets including furniture, fixtures, equipment, machinery, and real estate.

**Gross Profit.** Gross sales less cost of goods sold. Also called gross margin.

**Gross Sales.** Revenue or income from sales before returns and allowances.

**Intangible Asset.** Have no physical properties but represent something of value (for example, patents and trademarks).

**Inventory.** Assets held for resale. May be in the form of raw materials, work in progress, or finished goods.

**Liquid Collateral.** Collateral that can be converted to cash quickly.

**Line of Credit (LOC).** A short-term loan (usually used to finance accounts receivable and/or inventory)

**Liquid Asset.** Asset that can be turned into cash quickly, within one year.

**Long-Term Liabilities.** Expenses, loans, and payables due after one year.

**Net Profit.** Money left after all expenses have been paid. Used to pay loan principal and to grow the company.

**Net Sales.** Revenue or income from sales after returns and allowances are deducted.

**Net Worth.** Assets less liabilities. Show equity value.

**Non-Current Assets.** Assets that take one year or more to turn into cash.

**Operating Lease.** Leases which allow you to buy the item at the end of the lease, for a set price. These leases do not appear on the Balance Sheet.

**Owners’ Investment.** The money owners have invested in a business.

**Prime Rate.** The rate of interest lenders give to its prime customers from time to time. Most business owners are charged the prime rate plus a percentage.

**Pro Forma.** Projecting or forecasting future income, expenses, and cash flow.

**Retained Earnings.** Net profits accumulated through the company’s life and reported in the net worth or equity section of the balance sheet. Note: Can be negative if losses occur.

**Secured Loan.** Loan secured by collateral (which will be liquidated if the borrower defaults on the loan).

**Tangible Asset.** Real property (machinery, equipment, furniture and fixtures).

**Term.** A loan’s maturity, stated in months or years.

**Term Loan.** Loan, usually given in one lump sum at the closing. Repayment is monthly over a stated term.

**Trend Analysis.** Analysis of financial statements and ratios to determine the financial strength over time.

**Working Capital.** Difference between current assets and current liabilities. An indication of liquidity and the ability to meet current obligations.
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