

Quick Reference Card (QRC)

Information Sources Pros and Cons

Individual Conversation

Source for Information	Pros	Cons	Confirm or Refute Historical Factors*	Assess New or Emerging Critical Factors	Assess Market Psych.
Buy-side analyst or portfolio manager (as source for buy-side or sell-side)	Best place to gauge investor expectations	May not be representative of the larger investor base	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Company's competitor (publically-traded or privately-held)	Knows the sector and the competitive dynamics	May not be familiar enough with other company's factors to speak with authority. May try to bash the competition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Company's executives (including investor relations)	Usually forthcoming about opportunistic factors	Usually downplay or ignore potentially negative factors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conference speaker or author of book/academic paper	Usually willing to speak with others	May not fully understand implications for company or stock	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultant, expert, or company retiree	Very close to the issue	Can be difficult to find	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Customer of, or supplier to, the company (publically-traded or privately-held)	First-hand knowledge of the company's value proposition	Contact may not be representative of the larger customer base	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Government officials or staffers	Often the closest to regulatory or legislative changes	Often won't speak on the topic. If so, may not provide accurate forecast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Industry association or forecasting service representative	Understands complex industry issues	May be biased in the sector's favor and may not fully understand implications for company or stock	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Industry journalist/blogger	May understand complex issues and provide direction to other sources of information	May not fully understand implications for company or stock	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Sell-side analyst (for the buy-side) considered among top 3 in sector	May be the only place to gauge consensus thinking and to obtain proprietary research	Subjectivity or low-quality work can result in incorrect output	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sell-side salesperson (with deep knowledge of specific stock)	Close to many buy-side investors	Generalist salespeople may not have full understanding of any single stock	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Trader of stock (with deep knowledge of specific stock)	Usually familiar with short-term psychology of stock	May not fully understand company or long-term issues	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Legend: ■ = best first source, □ = good source

* Source must have been active with the stock/company at time of historical anomaly

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Read Only

Source for Information	Pros	Cons
Company press releases and regulatory filings	Free. May be only source for certain information	Tends to be biased positively
Data service	Often the best at providing granular product or sector data	Not always provided in a timely manner. Can be expensive. Not proprietary
Economic data	Often reliable and relatively objective	Not company-specific. Past trends don't forecast the future
Financial press	Low cost and somewhat objective	May not fully understand implications for company or stock
Forecasting service	Often the best at forecasting trends for the factor	Not always provided in a timely manner. Can be expensive. Not proprietary
Industry trade journal, website, or blog	Low cost. Somewhat objective. Understands complex issues	May be biased in the sector's favor. May not fully understand implications for company or stock
Proprietary survey	Output is proprietary	Expensive and can take a significant amount of time
Sell-side report (for buy-side analysts)	Easy to access and search (if client)	May be biased by analyst's rating
Third-party research firm	The study answers your specific questions and you own the data	Expensive and can take a significant amount of time

A View from Dilbert...

