We are all familiar with using checklists in our daily lives. Examples can include grocery checklists, to-do checklists, or checklists for planning a trip. Checklists keep us focused on the steps or elements needed to complete a task, and they help us verify that critical information has been collected. Whereas most general checklists usually are not used to create a report, CI checklists are used to create reports and can be very effective.

CI Checklists Are CI-Specific

Competent CI professionals rely on checklists to plan and complete competitive intelligence reports; CI checklists outline and guide CI reports. The three essential qualities of a CI checklist are that it must be pliable, procedural, and purposeful. Pliable means the checklist can be adjusted; steps can be added or subtracted. Procedural means the checklist is built step-by-step within an order, forming touchpoints for your report. Purposeful means the report is not a data dump, but rather, it answers specific questions. You may have to ask the attorney three different questions to determine what the attorney wants to know, how the attorney will use the information, and what the deadline is for the report.
Model CI Checklists
CI reports range from background reports about officers and directors, companies, and industries, to websites, litigation, transactions, and other activities.

As we discussed in the September/October 2019 issue of *AALL Spectrum*, CI checklist questions can be grouped into six categories:

1. People
2. Company
3. Litigation Parties
4. Intellectual Property
5. Industry
6. Other Activities

Let’s look at a few model CI checklists, which have been condensed here for purposes of illustration. Copies of the full versions of these models are available on practical.ciblogger.com and *On Firmer Ground* at bit.ly/ND19checklist. Feel free to adapt or modify them to suit your purposes.

People Checklist
- Name of person
- Address
- Telephone
- Email
- Social media presence
- Workplace
- Education
- Additional business relationships
- Who knows whom

Company Checklist
- Company name
- Company address
- Industry
- Officers & directors
- Social media

- Mergers & acquisitions activity
- Subsidiaries
- Law firm contacts within the company
- Locations in the world

Litigation Parties Checklist
- Plaintiff/Defendant ratios
- How many times in litigation?
- Win/Loss/Settle ratios?
- Which courts have they appeared in?
- Which judges have adjudicated this company?
  - By name
  - By percentage
- Which law firms/attorneys represent them:
  - By name
  - By percentage

Intellectual Property Checklist
- What is the composition of the IP portfolio?
- How many patents are:
  - Granted
  - Licensed
  - Sold
  - Expired
  - About to expire

Industry Checklist
- What is the overview of the industry?
- What are the names of the companies in the main industry?
- How do they rank in terms of size?
  - Number of employees
  - Revenue
  - Profit

Other Activities Checklist
- Is the company involved in Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) activities?
- What are their political contributions?
- Is the company on a watch list?
- What are their real estate holdings?
- What are their cybersecurity policies?
- Have there been data breaches?
- What information can be gathered from the website?
- Are there any Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) violations?

Now, Begin
Developing a CI checklist is the first step to gathering information for the CI report. Checklists create consistency for your reports and ensure that everything that needs to be included is incorporated.

READ

COMING SOON
AALL Competitive Intelligence Strategies & Analysis, May 2020. Details will be forthcoming.

AALL2go EXTRA
Listen to the 2016 webinar “Advanced Competitive Intelligence: Best Practices in Conducting CI Research,” at bit.lyAALL2go0616CI.