

The Site to Do Business Online: A Critical Resource for SIORs



Bruce Baker, CCIM, is the owner of Baker Realty Advisors, Inc., a commercial real estate consulting, brokerage, development,

and management firm based in Overland Park, Kansas. He has been in the commercial real estate industry since 1983 and his company focuses on providing client-based real estate services to local and national companies.



Richard E. Juge, CCIM, CIPS, SIOR, is the broker/owner of RE/MAX Commercial, Metairie, Louisiana, a commercial real

estate firm. He specializes in office and industrial leasing and sales including investment sales. He has been in commercial and investment real estate since 1988. Richard specializes in handling the needs of corporate clients on a regional basis for many national companies.

By Bruce Baker, CCIM, and Richard Juge, CCIM, SIOR

Note: Thumbprints of screen shots are provided to give readers a general idea of reports that users are able to generate by using the STDBonline product. Because of the size it would take in the magazine and the resolution of the screen shot, they are not sized to be readable.

In some respects, the business of commercial real estate hasn't changed as much in recent years as we might believe. Local market knowledge, connecting people and property, and solid financial analysis remain at the core of a successful career. One significant change has been the flow and type of information that practitioners can access to do their jobs. Previously, information itself was part of what the SIOR brought to the table for his or her clients and customers. Now, massive amounts of data on real estate markets at all levels are almost universally available. The challenge for SIORs is to determine what information is relevant to their business and clients, to learn how to interpret it, and to find the best way to access and integrate it within their business.

Recently, SIOR negotiated an agreement for members to access an Internet-based suite of products and services organized under a single platform by a wholly owned subsidiary of the CCIM Institute's company, STDB, Inc. The Web site—The Site to Do Business Online (STDBonline)—offers single-point access to a variety of data, including demographic trends, digital aerial imagery, flood and topography maps, and business information. While the information itself is not necessarily unique, it has been assembled and organized by commercial real estate professionals (not software engineers) so that users can easily navigate the site. And by paying careful attention to how the information is assembled for output, STDB makes it easier to quickly judge trends and opportunities.

Joseph Larkin, CCIM, CIPS, SIOR, of Larkin Commercial Properties, Inc., Albany, New York, says, "Every type of transaction will benefit from the 'power tools' that you get from STDB! Our company uses STDB extensively and our clients are happy that we do!"

The software engine that powers STDB is provided by ESRI, the world leader in GIS technology. SIOR members can access the site either by (1) clicking on the STDBonline link within the SIOR Intranet or (2) calling Carol Campbell at STDBonline at 469-574-1222. There are two subscription levels that differ in the amount and type of information the user can access. This article will focus on a few of the ways that SIOR members can use the Professional Level (Premium) subscription information to enhance their business.

STDBonline Overview for Premium Subscription

Digital Aerial Imagery: Users can access GlobeXplorer's Image Atlas of digital aerial imagery by clicking the "aerial imagery" link on the STDB home page. A new Web page appears. Once the user enters an address, city and state, or zip code, the screen displays the highest-resolution image in the database. The image can be panned or zoomed and the user can apply a street overlay tool. A topographic map tool provides a preliminary look at elevation. A map overlay tool allows users to keep the image clear of street information while allowing them to obtain street names by using a mouse over.

One feature seldom seen with online imagery is selective access to prior years' imagery of the same area. This is available via a drop-down menu at the top center of the Web page. In some cases, imagery dating back 10 years or more can be displayed, showing how an area has developed over time. The imagery is fully licensed for use and can be saved to a hard drive or e-mailed directly from the site. Once on a hard drive, the image can be imported into a variety of image-manipulation programs or even into Microsoft Word for further labeling or inclusion with a proposal. For an additional fee, users

can obtain higher resolution prints or digital files in a variety of sizes.



Flood Determination Maps: Another link on the STDB home page accesses flood determination maps that are supplied by Floodsource.com. The user enters address information and chooses the output format and colors for the legend. The FEMA flood panel map is displayed

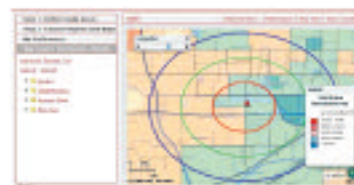
enabling the user to quickly determine if a particular property lies in a flood plain.

The digital imagery and flood hazard maps obtained from STDB provide useful information for listing presentations and marketing materials; they are also analytical tools for investigating properties for clients and customers. And because they are accessed from a single point (STDB), delivery of information is quick and easy.

Site Analysis: Also accessed from the STDB



home page, the ESRI Site Analysis link connects users to a myriad of data, reports, charts, and maps, allowing the display of and interaction with more than 11,000 demographic variables and lists of nearly 13 million businesses.



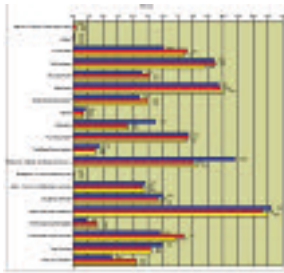
The user may choose from several report output options, including PDF and Excel, and is able to import several data file formats into on-screen maps to



display and/or overlay additional data they obtain from other sources. Many of the demographic and business variables can be displayed on thematic or colored maps, so that SIORs can quickly spot trends or differentiate areas of opportunity.

Application

STDB tools are as relevant for industrial and office properties as they are for retail or other property types. And while nice maps, aerials, and reports make for great proposal and marketing packages, the question most of us want answered is, “How can I make money with this information?” Below are some examples of specific STDB data/reports and how they may be applied to the sale, lease, development, or analysis of industrial or office property:

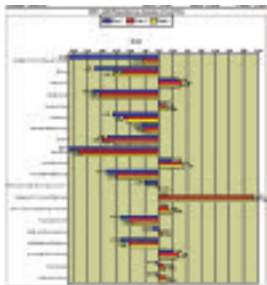


Report: Current Year Employed Civilian Population 16+ by Industry

Location: Office/Industrial Express Package

Description: A colored graph showing the percentage breakdown of various business classes by industry within the study area.

Application: Find location of dominant industries, compare percentage of industries to other similar/dissimilar areas, identify market gap.



Report: Current Year-Five Year Projection Population by Industry Annual Rate

Location: Office/Industrial Express Package

Description: A colored graph showing increase/decrease by industry within the study area.

Application: Determine which industries are gaining or losing ground around a property or area. This information can be used to target (1) industries that may be prospects for vacant

industrial/office space or (2) industries on the decline that may be targets for tenant representation assignments.



Report: Themed Map FIRE Employees

Location: Maps

Description: Color display of number of employees of a particular industry type in a study area.

Application: Quick view to determine high/low number of employees in a specific area by industry type.



Report: Business Locator

Location: Reports

Description: Predefined or user-chosen list of businesses in the study area by SIC or NAICS code, with summary demographics on employment and extensive information on specific companies,

including location, distance from chosen site, contact information, and number of employees presented in Excel format.

Application: In-depth analysis of specific companies in the study area.

Arie Salomon, CCIM, SIOR, of Puget Sound Properties, Bellevue, Washington, states, “STDB [is]... a tool in my arsenal when I’m trying to compete for business and differentiate myself from outside competition, and it has helped me to secure new business by providing a better set of services.” Whatever type of commercial real estate business you do, STDBonline can help you do it better.

Did you know . . .

The Spring 2007 Commercial Real Estate Index Press Release has been sent to the membership? The Index tracks the pulse of the industrial and office real estate market in the United States. Your participation in the Index is crucial. The more SIOR members—the Market Experts—participate, the more valuable and accurate the results of the survey become. SIOR members are the most knowledgeable and able commercial real estate practitioners. As an SIOR, you are well aware of this fact. You know it—let’s everyone else know it. Look for an e-mail from SIOR Headquarters in July and lend your expertise to the next survey.