

SITE SELECTION

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A typical mistake when searching for a new location is to jump into the car and drive all around town. While this feels productive, it isn't. You must first tackle the difficult challenge of identifying and prioritizing what you need from your new site.

You wouldn't shop for a computer system by driving to twenty computer stores and asking, What does a computer cost? You would begin by assembling your team to ask and answer a host of technical and managerial questions: When do we need it? What are our expansion needs? How are we going to pay for it? How do we make a transition? What are our technical requirements? What will the customers say? As with computers, site selection isn't about price, it's

about profitability. A lease or lot might be expensive because your profit potential would be high there.

If you're like most businesspeople, you haven't thought hard lately about how your business depends on its location. Retailers, office users and distributors use sites differently, but each user can benefit from a ranking system such as the one shown in [Table A](#). If you don't understand your needs, you'll waste a lot of time shopping - and still not get what you want. Use this table creatively. Reshuffle the priorities, redefine the items, set minimum requirements for each. Ultimately, you'll choose based on your intuition, but this approach will help you organize and discuss a lot of diverse information.

TABLE A	WEIGHT	COMMENTS/DATA
Local Market Strength <i>Demographics, competition, market trends</i>	12-8-4	
Visibility by Local Market <i>By drivers and pedestrians, sign opportunities</i>	12-8-4	
Access by Customers <i>Travel time, driving safety, pedestrian access</i>	9-6-3	
Neighborhood <i>Complementary stores, safety, appearance</i>	9-6-3	
Access by Suppliers <i>Travel time, dock access, security</i>	9-6-3	
Ongoing Costs <i>Rent/debt, utilities, taxes, etc.</i>	9-6-3	
Acquisition Costs <i>Purchase or improvement costs, etc.</i>	6-4-2	
Ease of Development <i>Zoning issues, developer credentials, etc.</i>	6-4-2	
Labor Availability <i>For all employee types, seasonal help</i>	6-4-2	
TOTAL		
COMMENTS: Complete one form per site; circle one of the three scores in the weight column for each criteria. The comments column might include hard data about each alternative, e.g., costs, traffic counts, ceiling height.		