

# **Office Buildings Field Research Manual**

## I. Overview

The field research process involves physically investigating the descriptions of buildings as they appeared in the previous edition of *Office Buildings*. Data for the books is organized into building profiles utilizing information from field research and correspondence. Profiles include address, size, managing and rental contacts, physical specifications and major office tenants. This information is gathered by the research department through communication with field research, phone research, Mr. OfficeSpace research, building representatives, published sources, and the sales department. The goal for each new edition is to modify each building profile to reflect the most current information available. The process is also designed to accept or remove building profiles from various sources to make the book more comprehensive. All buildings in the magazine should meet class “A” standards- measure at least 50,000 square feet (sf) per building or 100,000 sf per office park.

## II. Pre-production

Use the book publication schedule to formulate the procedures necessary for field research. This step should begin at least four weeks before field research commences.

Field research should be performed annually on approximately one-third of all buildings. Over a three-year period, all eligible buildings should be visited once. Eligible buildings *exclude* those that are scheduled to run as ads this year and those that ran as ads the prior year. Using the Office Buildings program (see example after this paragraph), compile a list of all buildings in each market; it will be helpful to sort by county and building area. Account for ads. When work is received, mark on this list. This will help you know which buildings to include in the following year. You may also use an existing list from the previous year.

**Create List**

**Publication**

All buildings

Publ   All pubs

**Fields to include in result**

Layout fields

Building Address fields

Market

Building fields

Building Details

Company fields

Type

Company address

Agent

Keep bldgs without related companies

Remove Duplicates

**Result table's location**

**Create List** **Cancel**

Print out field research sheets for that particular book. Attach the appropriate corresponding sheet from the book to each field packet; print the page from the pdf version (or DVD) of the previous year's edition. The pdf is located in the sub folder book\_pdf in the main folder for the specific book (such as [\\ARTDEPT\obbooks\DW\book\\_pdf](#) for Downtown). See Steve Rothman for this. The page from the book usually has the same information as the field sheet as well as photo and map.

Buildings added to the layout after the last edition was published will not be in that magazine; remind field researcher to take a photo and sketch a map for these.

Review any notes you may have regarding specific buildings or any Office Buildings database change forms that relate to lost contacts for buildings in this edition. Check the [Over 60 Days Report](#) for building that we have not been able to contact over the phone. Refer to the Google Doc [Field Research xtra](#) for requests for buildings to be visited. Also check the Google Doc [MrO Tracking/Research Bldgs](#) for anything else that may be a good candidate for a site visit. Check real estate company website listings to find properties not in our database; use the Real Estate Brokers Directory as a guide. Researchers should be alerted to the need to obtain additional information for all of these properties and to determine if they fit our criteria.

Field research also involves gathering information on proposed sites and buildings under construction. Use the New and Proposed Development article in the beginning of *Office Buildings* as a guide. Hand write the address and other important information (bldg. name, office park, developer, status, etc.) on blank field research sheets. Use ref no DC2282 as the blank field research sheet for these as well as for any properties not in our database that need investigation. Also, it is very important that the researcher take a picture of all new and proposed buildings. Have them take a photo of whatever is on the site, be it a newly constructed building, active construction site, billboard or just a plot of land.

### **III. *Hiring and field research process***

#### **A. *Hiring***

For hiring staff, check the list of researchers used in the past. There is a file named [roster.xls](#) containing names and information for each market, area(s) covered, and if the researcher is recommended. If researchers on the list are no longer available, it may be necessary to advertise.

Place a help wanted ad on [Craigslist](#) for that market; you may have to place an ad in more than one area to cover multiple counties. For all New York City books, ask around; there is usually a part-time researcher whose duties include New York field research.

This is how the ad should look:

**RESEARCH:** temporary position with commercial real estate publisher to conduct site visits in (indicate market). Must have own auto. No experience necessary. Will train. Good pay. Contract position. Contact (your name)  
Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm, PH: 800-411-2229 or e-mail: [\(name\)@yrinc.com](#)

Interviewing candidates is the next step. Consider a call in response to the ad as the initial interview. Briefly describe the goal of field research and the process, and gauge their interest. Remind them that this is a contract position and as such, taxes will not be withheld. Obtain their town/county; this will be useful in allocating buildings for visits.

A follow up call is usually necessary before hiring or setting up an in person interview. Only consider those who have a flexible enough schedule to complete the work in the specific time period. People in between jobs, students, free lancers, teachers who may have the summer off, and stay at home mothers are usually good choices. Those who have done similar work, such as canvassing for the U.S. Census, may also make good candidates. At the end of the conversation you can schedule a meeting with them if you are sure of the

time and location of the meeting. Coordinate travel plans with Iine Smithen at least one month in advance. Schedule more candidates than needed.

For smaller books (Boston/Cambridge and Cleveland), only 2 (at most) researchers are necessary and for larger books, you may have to someone for each county (Philadelphia, New Jersey, Westchester/Connecticut, Suburban Boston). Depending on the size of the county and the number of buildings in each, one researcher can cover more than one county. For example, one researcher always does work for all of the buildings in the New York section of the Westchester/Connecticut edition, which includes several counties. Base area assignment on both the researcher's home address and the location of properties within the county. Some of their work may cross over into two counties (New Jersey and Suburban Boston). It will be easier for the researcher to travel to sites closer to home and it will reduce the amount of mileage the company will reimburse. Refer to county maps in *Office Buildings*.

During the interview, review the field research process thoroughly. Allot at least a half-hour to interview and train. It may be helpful to do a walk through of a nearby building (time permitting). All candidates should fill out a brief application; this will also test their penmanship. Let the researchers know that hand writing is very important because their work must be legible.

Each new hire should sign the contract/agreement letter the same date of hiring if possible. If they are hired over the phone, remind them to fax the signed agreement or include it with the first batch of work. Make them aware of the deadline date. Give all hires a procedure document, introduction/reference letter, daily mileage logs, invoices, contract/agreement letter, business cards, and blank building sheets (for possible additions to the magazine) along with field research sheets for each assigned building. The introduction letter and the business cards can be used to make a building representative more comfortable with the researcher's information request. Stress the need for taking photos of any building changes (especially those with visible new retail tenants and in urban markets) as well as for new and proposed buildings. Remind them that they must indicate how they collected the data, i.e., filling in the bottom of page 2.

### ***B. Field research process***

Researchers are usually given approximately 6 weeks to complete the project; Manhattan editions take less time. Generally, 3-4 buildings can be completed per hour. The deadline provided to the researcher should be earlier than the actual deadline to ensure all work is received on time.

It is encouraged to go out on the road for one day with the researchers in the nearby markets of New Jersey, Westchester/Connecticut and Philadelphia. For Manhattan, you might want to check some of the work in person.

Weather or reasonable personal issues may cause some delay and an extension may be granted without penalty. Check with Ian Goodwin to determine how much of an extension can be given. It may be beneficial to start new researchers with a small batch of work to determine their reliability. Researchers should send back their first batch of work one week after starting. This is necessary to measure their progress and accuracy. All subsequent work should be sent on a weekly basis until completion. Researchers should include completed field sheets, mileage logs, all relevant receipts (disposable cameras, tolls, parking, and postage, etc.), and a completed and signed invoice in each package. All work should be mailed via the U.S. Postal Service through regular mail unless otherwise allowed.

Each field researcher will receive \$6.50 per existing building plus an additional \$.50 per building for those sheets completed and delivered before the deadline ([one researcher is paid on a different scale](#)). Proposed and under construction buildings are paid at \$2.00 and \$3.00 respectively. Researchers will also be reimbursed at \$.32 a mile after the first 30 miles a day have been deducted from the mileage log. Additionally, trains or bus rides as well as all applicable expenses will be covered as long as receipts are furnished. They must submit all receipts attached to their weekly invoice. Refer to an invoice sheet for all costs.

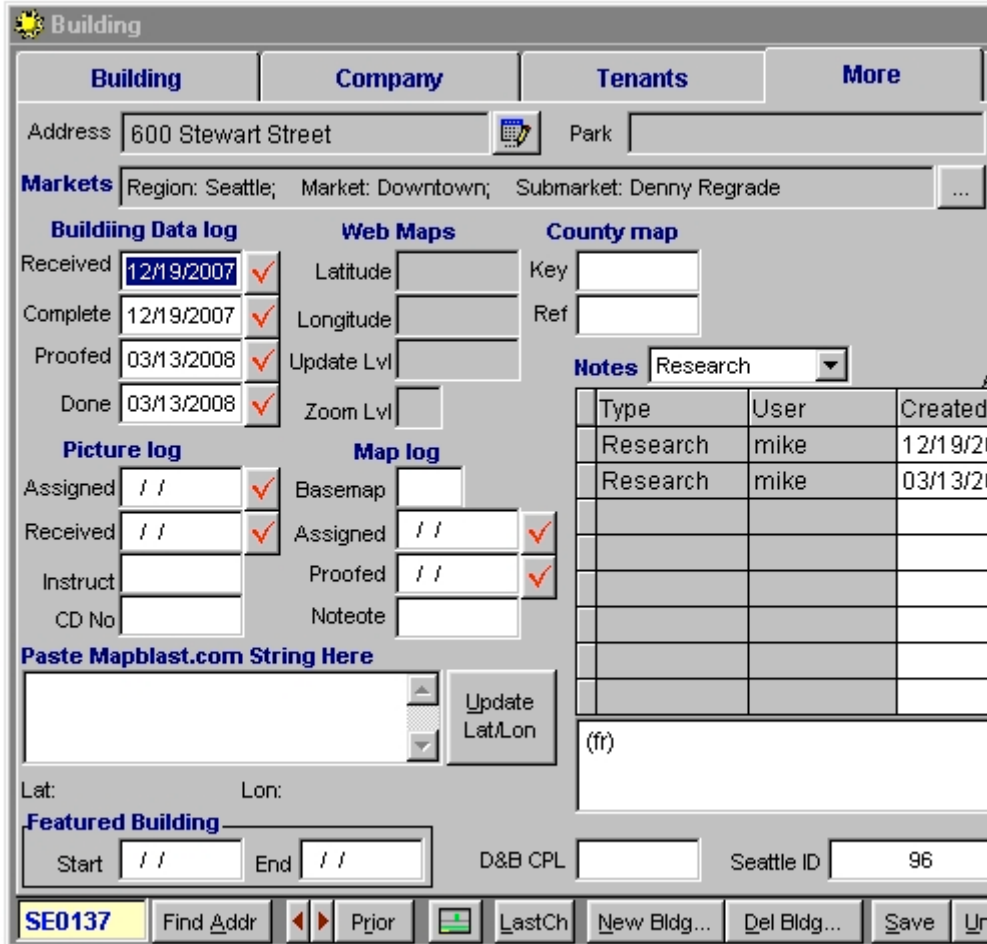
For non-Manhattan editions, correspond with the researchers at least once a week. Have them describe their experience and progress so far. Their feedback and observations are important. Halfway through the project, remind them of the approaching deadline. Increase communication as the deadline draws nearer. It

may be helpful to maintain a log of your communication with the researchers. Have Manhattan researchers return to the office at approximately 4:00 P.M. daily to review the day's work.

**IV. Completed field research**

- Completed field research sheets should be entered into the database, but not before changes are verified.

Upon receipt of work, check the Received button in the Building Data Log section of the More window in the building profile in Office Buildings.



Keep a spreadsheet of all work that has been received. This will help keep track of what is outstanding. Provide this list to Victor Marcos at the end of the field research project. He will use it to determine which buildings will have to be phone researched.

- Before entering the data into the database, confirm all contact, address and building name changes. Verify information where there are many tenant deletions. If there are not that many changes, remove 20-25% for a quality control check.

If there are no changes or all changes have been checked, give the work to OB data entry.

Process invoices in a timely fashion.

Check for photo changes as indicated by field researcher. Make copies of those sheets and place in a folder for Dianne Ramphal. Attach photo to corresponding sheet when received. Also look for any buildings where retail tenants have changed and would be visible, but no picture has been taken. The researcher may have to re-visit these to take a new picture.

Check for map changes as indicated by field researcher. Make copies of those sheets and place in folder for future changes. Refer to the [OB Map Procedures Manual](#) to handle these.

Check notes section of each building to see if it has already been marked as an early reply for advertising (will usually say "ER"). Give those to Sal.

Check if information regarding available space has been disclosed and match to what is in the space program. If the spaces have not been updated recently and/or the new data is different than what is in the database, notify Victor Marcos. If new tenants take space that is off the market, attempt to verify. Information regarding this will enhance the Big Deals section of the book.

Give anything you receive regarding proposed and under construction buildings to Dianne.

Note any discrepancies in building data or any information that may disqualify the listing from appearing in the magazine. Examples of this could include building area that does not equal total based on floor sizes, buildings that are under 50,000 sf, and single-tenant owner occupied buildings. Notify Victor and Sal of any buildings that do not appear to fit our criteria.

Save any information regarding new buildings that do not appear in our layout. These along with the building discrepancies described above can be investigated through phone research. Make Victor aware of these.

Maintain a list of all buildings that have been updated that you feel confident in the work produced. This list should be given to Victor to reduce redundancy in the phone research project.

Update the original building list from which you assigned work. This will help in deciding which buildings to visit next year.

A list of information that could not be verified before phone research began should be given to Victor.

Make Ian aware of any possible deletions.