



Left to right: Business Research Library staff: Tom Lutgen, Sonia King (seated), Francine Atwell (back), and Pat Diaz (standing).

BUSINESS RESEARCH LIBRARY

The Business Research Library (BRL), a specialty center of the Hawai'i SBDC Network, serves small businesses throughout the state from its location in the Maui Research and Technology Center in Kihei. Established almost 10 years ago, the BRL is noted for the high quality of its research and for the speed with which most questions are answered.

The BRL is staffed by library director Thomas Lutgen, researchers Sonia King and Francine Atwell, and administrative assistant Pat Diaz. Prior to joining the Hawai'i SBDC Network in 1998, Lutgen was the library director for the *Los Angeles Times* editorial library for five years. Previously, he was head of research at the *Times* for 14 years.

Clients from around the state contact the BRL through a toll-free 800 number. Many other clients in Hawai'i discover the BRL through its Internet site and pose questions via e-mail. The BRL responded to 1,180 research inquiries in the year 2000. About a third of the requests for research came from the various SBDC center directors and consultants on behalf of their clients. Other requests came directly from Hawai'i businesses or individuals interested in starting a business in Hawai'i. An additional 1,300 people visited the Business Research Library to use its resources for research or to pick up copies of brochures or forms on loan programs or state business and tax forms.

The Business Research Library answers a broad range of questions from business owners and managers or potential business owners. For instance, business people ask questions involving:

- Local, domestic and international consumer tastes and trends,
- Competitive analysis,
- Site locations,
- Alternative supplier information,
- New retail or wholesale outlets for local products or services,
- Import/export regulations and programs,
- Tax regulations,
- Human resources regulations and management,
- Food product labeling regulations,
- Universal product codes, and
- Trademark and business registration information.

Questions range over all industry types: agriculture, day-care, senior housing, amusement parks, sports and entertainment, activities and ocean recreation, restaurants, food and beverage packaging and marketing, film and video production, internet marketing and sales, to name a few.

As more and more business and economic information becomes available electronically, the resources available to the Business Research Library staff continue to grow rapidly. In addition to information available on the Internet, the BRL subscribes to hundreds of commercial databases, usually only available in large corporate libraries or academic research centers.

Two of the Business Research Library's clients are highlighted on the following page.



Aquasearch facilities located on the Kona coast of the Island of Hawaii.

Aquasearch

Aquasearch is a marine biotechnology company, committed to the discovery and commercialization of new medicines, food supplements, and natural animal feed additives. Located on a three-acre oceanfront parcel, Aquasearch is a global leader in photobioreactor technology. Industrial photobioreactors are a new “platform” manufacturing technology that unlocks the commercial potential of microscopic plants—30,000 species of microalgae. The company’s staff and its science advisory board include world leaders in marine biotechnology, including photobiology, fluid mechanics, natural product chemistry, aquaculture, and the physiology and biochemistry of microalgae.

One of the officers of Aquasearch sought out the Business Research Library, inspected its facilities, and soon after, began using its services. One of Aquasearch’s critical needs is to have easy and efficient access to technical literature for its scientific research. The scientists and engineers of Aquasearch must be able to refer to articles in a broad range of technical journals.

“The Hawai’i SBDC’s Business Research Library is an important resource for firms in Hawai’i that need quick access to technical literature. The Business Research Library can conduct searches of scientific and engineering databases and through its participation in interlibrary loan networks, the Library staff can retrieve copies of the articles cited. The Business Research Library is an important bridge to the information our staff needs to succeed.”

The Hawaiian Travel Club

Five years ago Paul and Cindy Kramer started their travel agency with just two desks. Now, their company, the Hawaiian Travel Club, employs 14 people and offices on Maui and in Kona on the island of Hawai’i. The Kramers have plans to expand to Hilo and Kaua’i. In fact, they plan to open the Hilo office within the next few months.

Seven days a week, the majority of the Hawaiian Travel Club’s business caters to wholesale markets, servicing clients on Maui as well as visitors having family on the mainland. The offices of the Hawaiian Travel Club have state-of-the-art computers with access to all three major airline systems, an uncommon feature for travel agencies.

The Kramers first contacted the Business Research Library for a name-search for their company. Since then, the Hawaiian Travel Club has been an active client of the Business Research Library. Kramer says, “The Business Research Library has been a consistent and valuable source to acquire information on just about anything you would want to know relating to any of the Hawaiian Islands. They provide and assist you with a true ‘aloha’ spirit. With the information we gathered through their assistance, we were able to be more confident making decisions in opening our first business in Hawaii as well as our second.”



From left to right: Sonia King, Cindy Kramer, and Tom Lutgen.