

DOCUMENTING YOUR COMPANY'S HISTORY

You are making history every day.

Unless you're Steve Jobs, Bill Gates or Warren Buffett, the world at large probably won't notice every move you make, but what you and your employees do has an impact.

If you do well, somewhere down the road you'll celebrate a significant milestone – 10 years or 20 years of serving customers, for example.

You might decide to publish a book or a video or a multimedia presentation about what you and your team have accomplished. Maybe you'll show some slides at a special dinner or just reminisce at a company picnic about what it was like back in the day.



Will you have the information you need?

You will if you start planning now for that special day and documenting your company history while it's fresh. It doesn't even have to be difficult or expensive. You probably already have much of your recent history saved in digital form.

Here are some things to consider if you want to document your company's unique story:

1. Get employees' input. They're helping you make history and many will be happy to help document it, particularly on special occasions like retirements and anniversaries. Ask them to reminisce on video or audio recording or by writing up a few memories.
2. Save PDF files of ads, brochures and other marketing materials. Make sure they're created in a way that is [searchable](#).
3. [Tags](#). Tags are free. Learn how to use them and tag your documents, photos and videos so you can find bits of information easily years from now.

4. Business information that you consider important enough to put in a newsletter or news release is significant enough to keep for future reference. Save those searchable files and others – all tagged, of course – and back them up with your other business files. (Consider setting up a [free or low-cost wiki](#) to organize your information.)
5. Using Facebook or MySpace page in your marketing efforts? It's a good idea to write and polish that information in your word-processing program before you post it for the world to see. Tag and save those files as your social media marketing archives, noting when and where you published the information.
6. Your own website, blog, podcasts and other communications should be great sources of information. Be sure to include links to media coverage about your business as well as to your own archived news releases.
7. Subscribe to relevant [RSS feeds](#) and set up [alerts](#) to help you monitor what's being said about your business. You may want to keep some of that information, too.

Even if you ultimately decide not to put your history in book form, you'll have a valuable record of what happened and when it happened, and how you and your employees served your customers and community.

B.J. Smith wrote about the most recent 25 years of [Rockwell Collins](#) history in the corporation's book "75 Years of Innovation" (published in August 2010) and co-authored a history of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with Susan Davis Smith.