

# The Ten Preliminary Steps To Site Selection **Success**

**Frank Raeon**

Author, **The ABC's of Site Selection: How To Pick Winners and Avoid Losers**  
Principal, **Location Decision Advisors** - [www.locationdecisionadvisors.com](http://www.locationdecisionadvisors.com)

If you do your homework chances are very good that you will put yourself in a position to make “smart” location decisions. A very important part of doing your homework is reading as opposed to skimming through the pages of my book, **The ABC's of Site Selection**.

Another part of doing your homework is getting organized. With this in mind I would like to provide you with a summary description of what I like to refer to as **the Ten Preliminary Steps to Site Selection Success**.

**Number One.** Have you taken the time to prepare a **business plan**? If the answer is no then you need to delay the start of your site search.

**Number Two.** Have you put together a list of **site selection criteria**? If not, you should determine which factors are the most important to the future success of your business concept. In other words, which factors are absolutely essential to identifying a “home run” location? This is a good time to revisit the Site Selection Scorecard information which is described in Chapter Seven of my book.

**Number Three.** Have you determined who your primary customers are? Have you identified any **customer profiles**? If you are contemplating going the franchise route your franchisor should be a big help to you. If you have an existing business but haven't conducted any customer survey information then you need to do so as soon as possible. To have market intelligence information at your fingertips and not tap into it would be inexcusable.

If you are a start up business you are at a bit of a disadvantage. However, knowing as much as possible about your competition and who their customers are, especially who their repeat customers are, can prove very helpful.

**Number Four.** Have you decided **where** you will begin your site search? Will you be looking for a regional location or a community or neighborhood location? Will you be looking for a location with lots of nearby rooftops or one which is surrounded by a significant amount of daytime employees? Will you be looking for

a location in a fast growth suburban area or will you concentrate your time and energies on finding a location in an older, underserved urban area?

**Number Five.** You need to think about **how** you are going to proceed. Will you go through the site selection search alone, or, will you do one or more of the following: work with a commercial realtor, knock on a prospective landlord's door, touch base with a property owner, or talk with a developer?

**Number Six.** Obtaining **demographic information** is important. What is even more important, however, is that you know what specific information to look for and analyze when you read thru a demographic report. Remember to focus on numbers as opposed to concentrating on percentages. If you need to, revisit and reread the contents of Chapter Eight of my book.

Supplementing demographic information with **psychographic information** is recommended for business decision makers who already have one or more retail or restaurant locations. Here your focus will be on understanding customer lifestyles; in other words, how people spend their money.

**Number Seven.** Once you have identified a particular location that you want to be in you need to conduct **area research**. It is critically important that you understand as much as possible about zoning, traffic counts, critical mass, anchors, competition, shadow businesses, subdivision activity, hours of operation, etc., etc.

**Number Eight.** At the same time you are conducting area research you should begin narrowing your list of **site options**. In determining which sites have the potential for becoming "home run" locations don't forget to visit Chapter One of my book—The Six Keys. This is where you will be introduced to the important **PASTA V** method of analysis.

**Number Nine.** Once you have narrowed your list of candidate sites to one or two your next task will be to (a) begin **estimating sales** and (b) **look at costs**. It is very important that your emphasis be placed on future sales as opposed to costs. This, unfortunately, is where too many new or small business people get it wrong. In addition, less seasoned commercial realtors are oftentimes guilty of making the same mistake by ignoring projected sales when completing their comparative site analyses. It is the hope of the author that neither you nor the resource person who is assisting you will make this all too common mistake.

**Number Ten.** If you have done the **homework** which has been described in Steps 1-9 you will not only be well positioned to make a series of smart location decisions, but, be able to negotiate either the purchase or the lease of prime real estate—the proverbial "home run" location. Once you have accomplished this

important milestone you will be on the road to consistently being able to pick winners and avoid losers.

---

**Frank Raeon** has been helping clients find high volume retail and restaurant locations for more than twenty-five years. Examples of national, regional, and local market leading companies he has helped include Blockbuster, Buffalo Wild Wings, Dewey's Pizza, Donatos, First Watch, Graeter's Ice Cream, Izzy's, McDonald's, Pier 1 Imports, Servatii's Bakery, Subway, United Dairy Farmer's, Walgreen's, and Wendy's.

Frank is also the principal of ***Location Decision Advisors***, a Cincinnati based real estate advisory company which helps small retail and restaurant companies and franchise organizations better understand how to pick winners and avoid losers. He is currently working on his second book: **Inside Site Selection**. It is based upon interviews he is conducting with people from throughout the United States who are responsible for making retail and restaurant location decisions.

You can **contact** Frank regarding the provision of advisory services, including site selection coaching, at (513) 271-0300 or via email at [frank.raeon@gmail.com](mailto:frank.raeon@gmail.com).