

For many investors, one of the most important sources of information is the company they are researching as a potential investment. Naturally, companies are eager to attract and retain investors. Hence, every bona fide publicly-traded corporation will have a link on their web page entitled, “Investors,” “Investor Relations,” or something to that effect. At the very least, you can order or download the latest annual and quarterly reports on their web site. However, most companies will have audio and/or audio/visual web casts available for download, frequently asked questions (FAQs), and other investor-related tools such as allowing you to enroll in electronic mail or text message alerts. Some even have research materials for students. But by far, the most popular item on a company’s investors’ relations web site is the quarterly earnings call.

Your assignment is to listen to or read at least 3 quarterly earnings calls. (Some companies only keep the audio version of the earnings call for a specific period but keep a PDF transcript for much longer.) Please choose up to 3 companies from the list below. Optionally, you may choose up to 2 companies not on the list but choose companies with significant global business. One idea is to choose a major competitor of one of your choices below. (Example: Choose MasterCard & Visa.)

Company	Date of Call	% Earnings Growth	Positive Outlook? (Y/N)	What is your outlook for the company? (Use a separate sheet if necessary.)
The Blackstone Group				
Caterpillar				
Chevron				
The Coca-Cola Company				
CostCo				
Dupont (<i>Woman CEO!</i>)				
IBM (<i>Woman CEO!</i>)				
MasterCard				
Nike				
Proctor and Gamble				
Schlumberger				
Yum Brands				
Your choice: _____				
Your choice: _____				

In the presentations, you will hear many terms that you will probably not understand. Below are some of them. Please give a one or two line description of each of the following terms (or as many as you can find! What are *SA and O expenses*?!):

1) forward-looking statements

2) non-GAAP financial measures

3) SA and O expenses

4) basis point

5) top-line growth

6) bottom-line growth

P.S. Other good examples include Alcoa, Disney, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, McDonald’s, Microsoft, Philip Morris, Pfizer, 3M, and UPS.