

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
OHIO

Finn Corporation, et al. v. Precision Machine & Manufacturing, Inc.

Finn Corporation v. Precision Machine & Manufacturing, Inc., No. 1:25-cv-418 (S.D. Ohio Nov. 24, 2025) · No. 1:25-cv-418 · Decided November 24, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio grants Plaintiffs’ unopposed motion to file under seal a four-page Memorandum of Understanding attached as Exhibit 1 to the Amended Complaint. The Court finds that the exhibit contains sensitive business and pricing information, that sealing is narrowly tailored and justified by a compelling interest, and denies as moot Plaintiffs’ earlier sealing motion.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jeffery P. Hopkins
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio
DECIDED	November 24, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-418
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs moved for leave to file Exhibit 1 to their amended complaint under seal. The defendant did not oppose the motion.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A party seeking to seal court records bears a heavy burden to overcome the strong presumption in favor of openness. The movant must demonstrate a compelling interest in sealing, that the interest outweighs the public's interest in access, and that the request is narrowly tailored. The court must make specific findings and conclusions justifying nondisclosure.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown

TOPICS

- commercial litigation
- commercial
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether plaintiffs demonstrated a compelling interest sufficient to overcome the presumption of public access to court records.
2. Whether sealing the entirety of Exhibit 1 was narrowly tailored and outweighed the public interest in access.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiffs established a compelling interest in sealing Exhibit 1 because it contained sensitive business information, including confidential pricing data, whose disclosure could provide competitors with access to plaintiffs' business strategy.
2. The request to seal the entirety of Exhibit 1 was no greater than necessary because the exhibit contained highly confidential business information, the public could understand the dispute and the document's relevance from plaintiffs' description, and the remainder of the amended complaint and exhibits would remain public.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A party seeking to seal court records bears the heavy burden of overcoming the “strong presumption in favor of openness” as to court records.” (Standard of Review)

“Plaintiffs’ Motion (Doc. 10) is GRANTED. Plaintiff is ORDERED to file Exhibit 1 under seal within 7 days of the date of this Order.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs sought to seal a four-page Memorandum of Understanding between themselves and Precision Machine & Manufacturing, Inc. The document contained sensitive business information, including confidential pricing data for parts purchased by plaintiffs for their products. Plaintiffs asserted that disclosure would reveal aspects of their business strategy and provide competitors with an advantage.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed an amended complaint and moved to seal a four-page Memorandum of Understanding attached as Exhibit 1. The court construed the motion as unopposed, granted the motion, ordered plaintiffs to file the exhibit under seal within seven days, and denied as moot plaintiffs' earlier motion to seal an exhibit to the original complaint.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Shane Grp., Inc. v. Blue Cross Blue Shield*, 825 F.3d 299, 305-06 (6th Cir. 2016)
- *Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp. v. FTC*, 710 F.2d 1165, 1176, 1179-81 (6th Cir. 1983)
- *Lipman v. Budish*, 974 F.3d 726, 753 (6th Cir. 2020)
- *In re Knoxville News-Sentinel Co., Inc.*, 723 F.2d 470, 476 (6th Cir. 1983)
- *Kondash v. Kia Motors America, Inc.*, 767 F. App'x 635, 638 (6th Cir. 2019)
- *Baxter Int'l, Inc. v. Abbott Labs*, 297 F.3d 544, 548 (7th Cir. 2002)
- *Exec. Jet Mgmt. Inc. v. Longbow Enters. LLC*, No. 1:21-cv-74, 2021 WL 4952705, at *2 (S.D. Ohio Apr. 1, 2021)
- *Veritas Independent Partners, LLC v. Ohio Nat'l Life Ins., Co.*, No. 1:18-cv-769, 2024 WL 986280, at *13-14 (S.D. Ohio Mar. 7, 2024)
- *Total Quality Logistics v. Riffe*, No. 1:19-cv-23, 2020 WL 5849408, at *2 (S.D. Ohio Sept. 30, 2020)
- *Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Inc. v. Covidien, Inc.*, No. 1:11-cv-871, 2017 WL 4168290, at *2 (S.D. Ohio Sept. 20, 2017)
- *London Comput. Sys. Inc. v. Zillow, Inc.*, No. 1:18-cv-696, 2019 WL 4110516, at *4 (S.D. Ohio Aug. 29, 2019)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
 WESTERN DIVISION FINN CORPORATION, et al.,: Plaintiffs,: Case No. 1:25-cv-418 v.: Judge
 Jeffery P. Hopkins PRECISION MACHINE & MANUFACTURING, INC., Defendant. ORDER
 Plaintiffs Finn Corporation and Express Blower, Inc. (collectively, “Plaintiffs”) have filed a
 Motion for Leave to File Exhibit 1 to the Amended Complaint Under Seal (Doc.

10) (the “Motion”). Defendant Precision Machine & Manufacturing, Inc. (“Precision”) has not
 filed any opposition to the Motion, so the Court will construe the Motion as unopposed. I.
 STANDARD OF REVIEW A party seeking to seal court records bears the heavy burden of
 overcoming the “strong presumption in favor of openness” as to court records. *Shane Grp., Inc. v.*
Blue Cross Blue Shield, 825 F.3d 299, 305 (6th Cir.

2016) (quoting *Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp. v. FTC*, 710 F.2d 1165, 1179 (6th Cir. 1983)).
 This presumption arises because “[t]he public has a strong interest in obtaining the information
 contained in the court record...[including] an interest in ascertaining what evidence and records” a
 court relies upon in making its decision. *Lipman v. Budish*, 974 F.3d 726, 753 (6th Cir.

2020) (citing *Brown & Williamson*, 710 F.2d at 1180–81). Indeed, “[o]nly the most compelling
 reasons can justify non-disclosure of judicial records.” *In re Knoxville News-Sentinel Co., Inc.*,
 723 F.2d 470, 476 (6th Cir. 1983).

In order to meet its substantial burden, the party seeking to seal court records “must show three
 things: (1) a compelling interest in sealing the records; (2) that the interest in sealing outweighs the

public's interest in accessing the records; and (3) that the request is narrowly tailored.” *Kondash v. Kia Motors America, Inc.*, 767 F. App'x 635, 638 (6th Cir.

2019). The moving party must therefore “analyze in detail, document by document, the propriety of secrecy, providing reasons and legal citations.” *Shane Grp.*, 825 F.3d at 305–06 (quoting *Baxter Int'l, Inc. v. Abbott Labs*, 297 F.3d 544, 548 (7th Cir. 2002)). Likewise, when a district court elects to seal court records, it must set forth specific findings and conclusions that justify nondisclosure to the public.

Brown & Williamson, 710 F.2d at 1176. II. ANALYSIS Plaintiffs seek to seal Exhibit 1 to the Amended Complaint, a four-page Memorandum of Understanding between Plaintiffs and Precision, because Exhibit 1 contains sensitive business information, such as confidential pricing data for parts purchased by Plaintiffs for their products. Doc. 10, PageID 65. Plaintiffs contend that the information in Exhibit 1 is central to Plaintiffs' business strategy and would provide its competitors an advantage and direct access to Plaintiffs' business model if publicly disclosed.

Id. at PageID 65–66. Courts in this District routinely find that there is a compelling interest in sealing documents that contain sensitive business information. See *Exec. Jet Mgmt. Inc. v. Longbow Enters. LLC*, No. 1:21-cv-74, 2021 WL 4952705, at *2 (S.D. Ohio, Apr. 1, 2021); *Veritas Independent Partners, LLC v. Ohio Nat'l Life Ins., Co.*, No. 1:18-cv-769, 2024 WL 986280, at *13–14 (S.D.

Ohio Mar. 7, 2024). Thus, because Plaintiffs seek to protect sensitive business information and prevent its disclosure to competitors, the Court finds that Plaintiffs have presented a compelling reason to seal Exhibit 1. *Total Quality Logistics v. Riffe*, No. 1:19-cv-23, 2020 WL 5849408, at *2 (S.D. Ohio Sept. 30, 2020) (quoting *Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Inc. v. Covidien, Inc.*, No. 1:11-cv-871, 2017 WL 4168290, at *2 (S.D.

Ohio Sept. 20, 2017) (“This Court has repeatedly ‘recognized that protecting confidential information that would otherwise allow competitors an inside look at a company's business strategies is a compelling reason to restrict public access to filings.’”). Further, the request to seal is no greater than necessary and there is no reason to believe that the information will be necessary for the public to understand or appreciate the substance of any forthcoming decisions in this matter.

See, e.g., *London Comput. Sys. Inc. v. Zillow, Inc.*, No. 1:18-cv-696, 2019 WL 4110516, at *4 (S.D. Ohio Aug. 29, 2019) (“[T]he public will not need to view the parties' highly confidential business information to understand the events giving rise to this dispute, or the arguments made in that motion.”).

The entirety of the Amended Complaint and remaining exhibits will be available to the public. Further, by virtue of Plaintiffs' description of Exhibit 1 in its Motion, the public will have

sufficient information to appreciate the relevance and importance of the document. Doc. 10, PageID 66.

I. CONCLUSION For the reasons set forth herein, Plaintiffs' Motion (Doc. 10) is GRANTED. Plaintiff is ORDERED to file Exhibit 1 under seal within 7 days of the date of this Order. In light of the Amended Complaint (Doc. 9) and the instant Motion, Plaintiffs' previous Motion for Leave to File Exhibit to Complaint Under Seal (Doc. 2) is DENIED AS MOOT. IT IS SO ORDERED.

November 24, 2025 (opeg (Kher effebhy(P. Hopkins United States District Judge