

DENISON
UNIVERSITY
CAREER SERVICES

EMPLOYER RESEARCH

Analyzing and Researching Your Potential Employer

Job applicants who have done their homework on employers definitely gain a competitive edge.

First, knowing about the employer and what it values in employees allows you to communicate an optimum match. **Second**, your knowledge of an employer demonstrates sincere interest in the position, office, and organization for which you're interviewing. Employers expect that you have done research and would prefer to spend their time with you discussing your fit with the position rather than explaining company/institution basics that you should have learned prior to arrival.

It is frustrating for a recruiter to talk with a candidate who doesn't have any knowledge about the company. A typical interview question asked is, "Why are you interested in our organization?" If you don't know anything about the employer, you won't be able to answer this question intelligently. Researching the organization also helps determine whether your goals will fit the promotional structures defined by that employer. For example, there are some employers who have a reputation for being conservative. If you are not a good match with this type of work environment, you know that this may not be the job for you. If after your research, you find the job/company is not a "fit", then consider something else!

ORGANIZATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

It's wise to begin researching weeks before your interview. You may find reams of information and you must be able to sort out the pertinent information and retain the key facts. Additionally, it may be difficult to find some information and some 'digging' will be required. It's a mistake to assume you know enough about the organization without doing any research. For example, you may know that Ralston Purina makes pet food, but are you aware the company also makes breakfast cereal, owns a major tuna fish company, and owns and operates restaurants? You may be talking with a subsidiary of a much larger company and not realize it if you don't do your research.

FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

- Recent Stock Price
 - If the company is public or privately owned
 - Size of organization in industry
 - Potential growth
 - Annual sales growth for past five years
 - Complete product line or services
 - Potential new products or services
 - Competition
 - Age of top management and their backgrounds
 - Geographical locations
 - Location of corporate headquarters
 - Number of plants, stores and outlets
 - Organizational structure
 - Type of training program
 - Promotional path
 - Recent developments via news stories
 - Relocation policies
 - Typical career path in your field
 - Name and correct spelling of recruiter's name
 - History of organization
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INFORMATION SOURCES AVAILABLE

Researching an organization can be done through a variety of sources. The primary sources should be annual reports, employment brochures, and the organization's web site. While this information is prepared by the organization and includes predominantly positive information, it is a good starting place. All publicly held companies are required to report to their stockholders via annual reports. If the Career Resource Library does not have the necessary information, you can contact the organization directly. Doane Library also has different business periodicals and newspapers.

Robert G. Traxel, author of *Manager's Guide to Successful Job Hunting*, suggests using the following publications. These are listed below and should be perused for articles, both about the company in question and also its competition.

- The Wall Street Journal
- Barron's
- Dun's Review
- Business Week
- Forbes
- Fortune
- Trade publications
- Finance and business section of local newspaper
- News weeklies
- Wetfeet.com
- Hoovers.com
- Vault.com
- experience.com
- Monster.com

There are also directories available which can be useful sources. Check with the library reference department and ask for advice. If the library doesn't have the information you need, they can often refer you to an alternative source. Useful directories include:

- Standard and Poor's corporation records
- Dun and Bradstreet reference library
- Moody's manuals
- Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers
- Million Dollar Directory
- Ward's Business Directory
- Specialized single-industry directories

Employer Research & Periodicals

- [America's Career Info Net](#) - Trends, state info, employer locator.
- [American Stock Exchange](#)
- [Colleges & Careers Center US News](#)
- [Career Exposure](#) - Premier job site with direct access to 100's of corporate job postings.
- [Career Journal](#) - The Wall Street Journal's Background Reports.
- [Career Magazine](#)
- [Company Press Releases](#) - Access breaking news from tens of thousands of organizations around the globe.
- [Corporate Info Page](#)
- [Dun & Bradstreet](#) - Information on more than 11 million companies.
- [Federal Job Search Info](#) - Search federal opportunities, receive e-mail notification of openings.
- [Hoover's On-line](#) - Corporate websites & company profiles.
- [StockMarketYellowPages](#) - Search for public companies based upon their descriptions.
- [The Riley Guide](#) - guides you through the many online sites and services that are useful for your job search.
- [The Salary Calculator](#)
- [Vault Reports](#) - Employer & career profiles to help prepare for interviews (Order through the web)
- [WetFeet.com](#) - Industry and Employer guides.