

Seeking resources to compile EMPLOYER RESEARCH

HEGI FAMILY CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

*Thoroughly researching an employer can mean the difference between knowing enough to apply and knowing enough to actually lock down the job. **Employer Research** can usually be accomplished through highly-accessible, low-cost resources. The time you take to investigate your dream job will be time well invested.*

*When conducting **Employer Research**, among the areas of possible interest are:*

- ♦ *Company Overview*
- ♦ *Employer Image*
- ♦ *Types of People*
- ♦ *Locations*
- ♦ *Professional Development*
- ♦ *Web Resources*
- ♦ *Growth Potential*
- ♦ *Salary Ranges*
- ♦ *Products*
- ♦ *Competitors*
- ♦ *Government Employment*

Researching the employers for whom you most want to work, will allow you to tailor your resume to fit their needs and to be more knowledgeable during your interview.

WHY SEEK INFORMATION ABOUT PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS?

Q: What is "Employer Research?"

A: Employer Research is the process of obtaining information on prospective employers, which can be used to determine which job would best fit you.

Increase your marketability

Research will enhance your marketability to potential employers. Research exemplifies your interest and enthusiasm toward an organization by showing the employer that you are knowledgeable about their organization. One of the top complaints among employers is that recent graduates have not adequately prepared themselves for the job search.

In addition to helping you make a good first impression, researching employers will allow you to create better cover letters and resumes to target specific positions within an organization, as well as better prepare you for the interview.

Make an informed decision

You may research employers to locate positions related to a particular type of work, industry, or geographic location that will aid you in the process of narrowing and selecting a future career.

FACTS YOU MAY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT EMPLOYERS

It is important to first establish what information you will want to know about a potential employer. Researching an employer will provide an overview of the organization including valuable information regarding: Products and services offered, financial health, plans for future growth, potential career path options, and employee training, among many other areas.

The information obtained through research will be useful in helping you decide whether or not to accept a position.

The following list will help you organize information that will be useful to have at your disposal during the interview.

CHECKLIST OF FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT AN ORGANIZATION

Company Overview

- ___ What does the company do? What products and services do they provide?
- ___ What is the size of the organization (number of employees)?
- ___ How is the current financial health?
- ___ What is the anticipated growth? Are there any expansion plans?
- ___ How is the organization structured (Management)?

Employer Image

- ___ What is the organization's national and local reputation in the market?
- ___ What awards or recognitions have they received?
- ___ What is their relationship to competitors?
- ___ What associations are they actively involved with?
- ___ What is their sales growth over the last five years?

References: <http://www.fsu.edu/~career> and *The First Job Hunt Survival Guide* (Morton & Fox, Eds.)
Texas State University - San Marcos Career Center

People

- What are the credentials/qualifications of the top executives?
- How would you describe the organizational culture/working environment?

Locations

- Where is the corporate headquarters located?
- Where are branches, subsidiaries, stores, satellite offices, etc. located?

Professional Development Concerns

- What type of training programs are offered to employees?
- What is the typical promotional path?
- What is the typical career path in the field compared to that of the company?
- What benefits are offered?
- How are employees reviewed or evaluated?

**ORGANIZING YOUR DATA:
WHAT TO DO WITH THE INFORMATION YOU GATHERED**

Locating employers can be a time-consuming process. Therefore, it is imperative that you start your employer searches early. Some information may not be available through printed information and you may need to set up information interviews, make phone calls, or search the Internet for answers.

As you begin gathering information on employers, you'll want to keep the facts organized. Maintaining a file for each employer will make preparing for the interview easier by preventing information from running together. You may want to compile a summary sheet of recorded, more relevant, facts.

OBTAINING EMPLOYER INFORMATION ON-LINE

Use the following Internet sites to seek out employers' web sites, to find and analyze information about a company, or to develop a list of employers for your job search.

General Company Searches

www.acinet.org (America's Career Info Net)

Search employers by name, industry and location. This site also provides useful career information such as wages and trends, occupational outlooks, and skills necessary for chosen occupations.

www.companiesonline.com

SEC documents for 10,000 public companies including insider filings, annual and quarterly reports. Provides links to company websites.

www.hoovers.com (Hoovers Online)

Provides a master list of 10,000+ companies with direct links to their corporate websites, SEC filings, and other company information. Also includes job listings.

www.vaultreports.com

Insider guides to companies, including many anonymous interviews with current and past employees to find out "what it's really like in there."

www.wetfeet.com

Research companies, careers, industries, city profiles. Provides list of insider guides to companies for purchase.

www.wsrn.com/ (Wall Street Research Net)

Click on "researching a company" to find links to companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange, the American Stock Exchange, NASDAQ, and the OTC Bulletin Board

www.companiesonline.com

Direct links to company websites. Searches available by SEC stock ticker, company name, zip code, revenue, and type of business.

Top Company Listings

http://www.fortune.com/indexw.jhtml?channel=/editorial/list_links.html (Fortune500)

List of all the Fortune top companies lists including: America's largest corporations, world's largest corporations, America's most admired companies, World's most admired companies, America's best companies for minorities, and 100 Fastest growing companies.

<http://www.forbes.com/tool/toolbox/forbes500s> (Forbes)

Search America's largest corporations by sales, profits, assets and market value.

www.sba8a.com/

Searchable directory of minority and women-owned businesses. Search by industry and/or state.

SEEKING EMPLOYER INFORMATION THROUGH OTHER MEANS

General Resources

Directories

Available at local libraries. These publications provide information about an organization's products or services, the number of employees, principal executives, and locations. Other information might include revenues generated, major clients, and descriptions of subsidiaries.

Informational Interviews

You can meet with an employee willing to provide you with information about their particular organization. Because the Informational Interview is not a formal job interview, the tone is more low-key, a more relaxed request for facts. (Also see SMU Career Services handout, "Preparing to Conduct an Information Interview.")

University Libraries

SMU's Fondren Library provides a multitude of general resources related to Employer Research. Find information regarding the best periodicals and books for your purposes through the "Ask A Librarian" service by submitting questions at www.smu.edu/cul/ask/index.html. Consult your academic advisor on what library may best fit your needs. Also, visit the Business Information Center (BIC) in Maguire for additional resources.

Specific Question

Specific Resources

Location?

- State industrial directories
- *Dun & Bradstreet Reference Book of Corporate Management*
- Regional development agencies
- State and local Chambers of Commerce
- Telephone directories
- Business sections of local newspapers
- Moody's manuals
- *Directory of Corporate Affiliations*
- Company 10Ks and annual reports
- *Job Seeker's Guide to Private and Public Companies*

High-growth Industries?

- Value Line Investment Surveys
- Predicasts forecast manuals
- *Directory of Industry Data Sources*

Salary Levels?

- American Compensation Association publications
- *The American Almanac of Jobs and Salaries*
- American Management Association surveys
- National Association of Colleges and Employers salary survey

<u>Specific Question</u>	<u>Specific Resources</u>
Competitors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dun & Bradstreet Million Dollar Directory</i> • <i>Standard & Poor's Industry Survey</i> • Business periodicals index • Industry Buying Guides
Products Made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company annual report • Moody's manuals • <i>Thomas Register</i> (company catalog volumes) • <i>U.S. Industrial Directory</i> • American Business, Company Profiles (CD ROMs)
Company Reports & Analyses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard & Poor's Stock Report • Moody's Investors Fact Sheets • Value Line Investment Surveys
Key Personnel?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dun & Bradstreet Reference Book of Corporate Management</i> • <i>Standard & Poor's Corporations, Directors, and Executives</i> • <i>Who's Who</i> directories • Corporate proxy statements
Executive Recruiters?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Directory of Executive Recruiters</i> • <i>Job Hunters' Sourcebook</i> • Directories produced by state or local associations
Government Employment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State: The State Administrative Officials Classified by Functions has a section listing state employment offices and phone numbers • Federal: The U.S. Office of Personnel Management recruits Civil Service positions at GS 1-15.

INCORPORATING YOUR FINDINGS INTO THE INTERVIEW

Simply being informed about an employer does not guarantee a successful interview unless you use that information effectively. Knowledge of products and opportunities is only helpful if you know how to tactfully weave that knowledge into the interview. Spouting out facts or prefacing a question with a lot of memorized details will not convince the employer of your interest and/or knowledge.

During the interview, most employers will ask some variation of, "Why do you want to work for our organization?" or "What are your long-range career goals?" Relating your skills to those in the literature which seem to be needed for a position, or valued by the organization in general, can be an effective way to show that you've done your homework. Remember to bring in transferable skills like communication, writing, sales, or computer knowledge. Before the interview, brainstorm how you can help the employer be competitive in specified markets found through your research.

Another way to incorporate information is through the questions that you ask the employer, usually towards the end of the interview. Request information only on topics you really want to know more about, and avoid being too detailed or projecting a "know-it-all" attitude. Ask questions that encourage the employer to expand on information from the literature.

One last thing — researching the employer is important, but so is researching the position for which you are applying. Determine what the daily responsibilities will be, what the specific functions are of the department — in other words, what will you be doing and where will you be doing it? Interviewers will ask why you have applied for that specific position, and you need to know! So pay special attention to the job description!

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