

WHY SPEND TIME ON COMPANY RESEARCH?

Whether you are conducting a full time job search or are currently working and seeking a new opportunity, you must focus on best use of your time. There are many reasons why research is a good investment of your valuable time.

It's advisable to focus on your specific profession, industry and area of expertise. It is helpful to research the company history, leadership, culture, core values, financial stability, products, services, philanthropic endeavors and growth.

A standard interviewing question is, ***"Why do you want to work for our company?"***

This provides you with an opportunity to share the research you have conducted about the company. This knowledge will differentiate you from other candidates.

One of the most important skills a job seeker can learn during a job search is research skills. Your ability to effectively conduct research can make or break your job search. Sourcing and researching are skills you must improve throughout your entire career. Your knowledge demonstrates your interest and enthusiasm for the company and the job to potential employers.

STEP ONE: DETERMINE PROPER TIMING FOR RESEARCH

There are three critical points in your job search when you should conduct research.

- 1. When you begin your search**

You want to identify the best targets in your profession or industry

- 2. During the application process**

This allows you to customize your cover letter and Resume or CV to each employer

- 3. Prior to an Interview**

You want to be more knowledgeable than your competition

STEP TWO: DETERMINE THE INFORMATION YOU NEED

General Company Information

This would include products, services, history, company culture, mission, goals, key financial statistics, organizational structure and locations.

Employment Issues

This includes career paths, advancement opportunities, virtual opportunities, benefits, diversity initiatives and other Human Resource functions. You would also research the industry and key competitors.

STEP THREE: WHICH COMPANIES ARE BEST

If you have no idea which companies might be best, there are some good places to start. A number of media companies have already done much of the research for you and have produced various “best” lists.

Examples:

- Best Companies to Work For
- Best Companies for Women
- Best Private Companies
- Best Employee-Owned Companies

STEP FOUR: WHERE TO FIND COMPANY INFORMATION

One of the easiest resources for company information is the company website. You can find the company website by going to your favorite search engine like Google.com and typing in the company name in the search box.

Among the two best sources for gathering information on public companies online are: BusinessWeek, Company Research and Hoovers Online. If you’re interested in larger companies you can review the Fortune 500 top company list. Fortune provides similar lists for the 100 Fastest Growing Companies and the 100 Best companies to work for. Two resources for private companies are Forbes Largest Private companies list and The Inc. 5000 list of America’s fastest growing privately held companies.

STEP FIVE: COUNTRY AND LOCATION INFORMATION

If you are considering relocating or even the possibility of a global opportunity, you need to gather information about the location to determine if you want to relocate.

For conducting research within the US, we recommend SperlingsBestPlaces.net, where you will find a wealth of data, statistics and comparisons from the US as well as other countries. To gain a better understanding of locations outside the US you should review CIA World Factbook which contains snapshots, compiled by the US Government for just about every country in the world.

The research you conduct is the foundation of your entire job search process and will help you make informed decisions that will benefit you most.