You know how to do it. You have spent time gathering information to complete a paper for a class or to find an apartment. Now you are looking for an employer where you may spend the next 2-5 years. As you learn more about an organization you begin to get a sense of the employer and improve your chances of being selected for the job you want. Now, take the time and do your homework… research!

### Where to locate employer information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company literature</th>
<th>Annual reports</th>
<th>Brochure and fact sheets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fortune Magazine</td>
<td>Industry magazines</td>
<td>Newspapers (local and national)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td>Subscribe to RSS feeds</td>
<td>Company website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American's Corporate Families</td>
<td>Job fairs</td>
<td>Google search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sessions</td>
<td>Receptions</td>
<td>Competitor’s website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials within CCPD</td>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>Vault (<a href="http://www.vault.com">www.vault.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees of the company (especially SFA alumni!)</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce Member Directory (state and local)</td>
<td>Directory of Business Information Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*RSS (Rich Site Summary) allows users to easily stay informed by retrieving the latest content from websites and delivering it to one central location. Use this in your job search by subscribing to the employer’s website, news about the employer or industry, changes in the job economy, etc. The RSS icon looks like this:* ![RSS icon](http://example.com/rss_icon.png)

### Employer information to know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job description(s)</th>
<th>Typical career paths</th>
<th>Personnel policies and benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee evaluation process</td>
<td>Cost of living</td>
<td>General hiring patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries/Compensation forms</td>
<td>Organizational structure</td>
<td>Types of products or services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent major changes</td>
<td>Current challenges</td>
<td>Parent company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidiaries</td>
<td>Major activity of company</td>
<td>Competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Financial status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating divisions</td>
<td>Top executives</td>
<td>Company history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company size</td>
<td>Philosophy and objectives</td>
<td>Mission statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock prices (if relevant)</td>
<td>Travel/Relocation expectations</td>
<td>Corporate headquarters location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth; history and anticipated</td>
<td>Awards/Recognitions received</td>
<td>Associations, philanthropies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name, age, location, and number of plants, offices, and stores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE: Consider the source of any information – not everything you read on the Internet is accurate!*

### Incorporating your research 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.

**Method #1: Answering questions**

During the interview, most employers will ask “Why do you want to work for our organization?” Spouting out memorized facts will not convince the employer of your interest and/or knowledge. An effective way to show that you’ve done research is to relate your skills to those in the job description and those valued by the organization as based on your research.

**Example:** Why do you want to work for this company?

“As I understand the job, there’s plenty of opportunity to be involved in both the planning of marketing strategies and the actual selling. Besides using my communications skills and knowledge of chemicals in direct selling, I believe I am creative when it comes to marketing.”
Method #2: Asking questions
Another way to incorporate information is through the questions that you ask the interviewer, usually near 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 gained during the interview process or through your research.

Literature: “Today’s large store manager usually has gained experience in district or regional staff work.”

You: “In viewing some of the background that your large store managers have, regional staff work is mentioned. Could you describe some of the responsibilities of staff work?”