

Research Employers

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

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

Company literature	Annual reports	Brochure and fact sheets
Fortune Magazine	Industry magazines	Newspapers (local and national)
Wall Street Journal	Subscribe to RSS* feeds	Company website
American's Corporate Families	Job fairs	Google search
Information sessions	Receptions	Competitor's website
Materials within CCPD	Libraries	Vault (www.vault.com)
Employees of the company (especially SFA alumni!)	Chamber of Commerce Member Directory (state and local)	Directory of Business Information Resources

*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: 

Employer information to know

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

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?"