

WANT TO STAND OUT IN THE JOB OR INTERNSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS? DO YOUR RESEARCH FIRST!

In order to represent yourself as a strong candidate during the job or internship application process, you must demonstrate **knowledge of the industry, organization, and position** to which you're applying. For interviews, we also recommend you do your **research on the people with whom you'll be interviewing**. Knowledge gained through careful research, if communicated properly in your cover letter or interview, will enable you to distinguish your candidacy from others who are less prepared.

GETTING STARTED

- **Websites** are a good place to begin since they usually reveal the organization's mission, values, programs, products, and services. In rare cases when you cannot find information online, contact the organization's public relations or human resources department.
- **Annual reports** contain information on fiscal health, recent accomplishments, and strategic priorities. They are not always easy to find, but some companies or organizations post them online.
- **Google** the company to see if they have been in the news or discussed on other websites.
- **LinkedIn** allows companies to set up pages where they post jobs, updates, and relevant news.

OTHER RESOURCES

- **CareerBeam:** Research tools to get up-to-date information on current trends, news, and the job outlook for a wide variety of industries. Under the Research Tools tab on the Career Beam homepage, select Industry Reports and then browse or search for the industry that interests you.
- **Vault:** Industry guides and company profiles. Create a free account with your Amherst email.
- **Business Insights: Essentials:** Information on company history, financials, rankings, market share reports, and relevant news articles that appear in trade journals, academic journals, and magazines.
- **Glassdoor:** Database of employee-generated company reviews, CEO approval ratings, salary reports, and interview questions. Register using your Amherst email address for broader access.
- **Guidestar:** Details on nonprofit organizations, including IRS 990 tax returns, spending, employee compensation, and more.
- **Charity Navigator:** Rates charities on their financials (what % they spend on different aspects of the organization and where they get their funding from) and accountability/transparency.
- **Amherst College Library:** Use the Journal Search function to find on-line versions of the industry or trade publications (e.g. Chronicle of Philanthropy, Advertising Age etc.).
- **Lexis/Nexis Academic:** Use the Advanced option to search by content type, and select Company Profiles. This basic overview gives you information on the financials of the company by fiscal year and lists the company's competitors.

EMPLOYER RESEARCH

CONTACTING ALUMNI

Speak with alumni who work in the organization or industry to gather information and hear about their experience. Utilize the Alumni Directory and LinkedIn to learn about alumni and read the Connecting with Alumni handout prior to making contact with them.

GATHERING INFORMATION

There are some key questions you should be able to answer about an employer and industry when applying to and interviewing for a position.

INDUSTRY

- What are the common products/services?
- Who are the most typical customers?
- What are the advantages and the challenges of working in this industry?
- What does the typical organizational chart look like?
- What are the general responsibilities, skills and personal characteristics required for success?
- What are the entry-level opportunities?
- How do people advance?
- What are the leading professional or trade organizations and publications?
- Is there a particular geographical concentration of jobs?
- What does the compensation structure look like?
- If graduate education is required, what degree is the most advantageous?
- What are the 5-10 largest organizations? The fastest growing? The most admired?
- What are some of the recent developments in the industry, in terms of both opportunities for growth and potential threats?

ORGANIZATIONS/COMPANIES

- What is the mission of the organization, group, or division with which you will interview?
- What are their leading products and services?
- Who are their primary customers, competitors, suppliers?
- What are their signature and recent publications, projects, campaigns?
- What is the structure of the organization?
- Is the organization public, private, governmental, or a hybrid organization?
- Who are the key management figures? Who are the key players in your targeted area?
- What are the strategic goals of the organization?
- What are opportunities for growth for the organization?
- What are the potential threats to it?
- What is the financial status of the organization? For public companies, what is their stock price? What has its performance been over the last five years? For nonprofit organizations and government entities, how are they funded?
- Has the organization been in the news recently? Have any of its employees?
- Where does the organization advertise? What type of events does it support?
- What do former employees (or employees at competitor organizations) say about the organization?