

The Importance of Conducting Company/Organizational Research BEFORE Interviewing

- How well are you prepared for your employment interview?
- Have you adequately researched the company/organization?

Having a resume, dressing professionally and being a college senior, does not automatically prepare you for an interview. Although these factors are important, performing company/organizational research is equally necessary. In today's tough and competitive job market, an employer expects a job candidate to be knowledgeable and conversant regarding their company. This may include your awareness of the company's: mission, structure, products, customers, competition, and financial outlook. A recruiter may interpret the extent of your knowledge as an indicator of your motivation and a predictor of your potential work style. Asking questions about a company's basic products and services (which could early be found online) may be viewed by the interviewer as a lack of initiative or interest on your part. Research may seem like a lot of work to do before every interview, but time invested in information gathering pre-interview often yields positive results later.

Finding this information for Fortune 500 companies, or entities that are publicly traded, is relatively easy. In addition many companies can now be followed through **Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Glassdoor**. However, it may be harder to source details on smaller local companies, government opportunities, and non-profits, and you may want to consult **www.guidestar.org** and **www.ourpublicservice.org**

First check if the company/organization has a website, but do not let your research stop there. Review additional appropriate directories such as: **Better Business Bureau, Business Source Premier, Dunn & Bradstreet Small Business Solutions, Hoover's Online, Local Chambers of Commerce, Mergent Online, Net Advantage, Selectory, Value Line, and Vault.com**. Many of these resources are available at the Western New England University D'Amour Library.

When reviewing an organization's website, pay attention to their home page, business summary/mission, product lines or services, recent press releases/highlighted news events, employment/career opportunities, and in some instances contact information. If an annual report is included, you should read it. For some companies you may find previous candidates posting information about their interview experience on **www.glassdoor.com**

Another source of key information is local and area newspapers including: **The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Boston Globe, The Springfield Republican, or other publications as noted in Lexis Nexis Academic (by newspaper geographic region)**. A newspaper will often highlight the most prominent company issues, with a search in the last 12 months yielding interesting material. Remember to consult your librarian, if you need additional assistance utilizing the appropriate digital database or search engine, or to refine your company search.

When you cannot find information on companies you are unfamiliar with and/or if the information you find appears questionable, consider using **Google**. Search by the name of the company or organization and include either the word complaint or scam. While this is not a foolproof method, it may provide you with additional information to evaluate. After reviewing the Google results, determine if you are still interested in interviewing with the company/organization.

Remember, being prepared and knowledgeable about a company/organization, demonstrates you are a serious candidate who has taken the time to consider the opening and your potential fit! Good luck.