

Company Research

Where and how to Conduct Company Research

Whether preparing for a job interview or developing a list of companies to target, the following resources can help you uncover important company details and contact names:

If you're a college student or recent alumni, check with the career center at your school. Many maintain libraries of company research resources. You can also ask for a list of companies that have recently hired graduates of your school / program.

Public libraries stock company research resources too, such as the *Thomas Register*, a comprehensive on-line resource for finding companies and products manufactured in North America. If you don't know where to look, just ask a librarian for help.

The Kirstein Business Branch of the Boston Public Library is an excellent source of information – check out The Directory of Top Computer Executives. For more information, visit <http://www.bpl.org/research/kbb/kbbhome.htm>.

The Web is also an excellent place to conduct company research. Many companies know that you might be visiting their Web sites for exactly that reason. Study information about the company and the description of the job you are interested in.

Other Web sites, such as www.corptech.com and www.hoovers.com, exist solely to provide information on key decision makers, financial history, and product details.

Use a site like www.anywho.com to develop a list of “target companies” to contact. Select a category and geographic region, and a list of company names (with addresses and phone numbers) will appear.

One of the best places to conduct company research is straight from the source. It doesn't hurt to contact the human resources (HR) department of the company for which you have an upcoming interview. Ask about company literature, such as product brochures, job descriptions and new-hire orientation packets. They may be impressed that you took the time to do your homework.

In addition to collecting marketing brochures from a company, someone within that organization may be willing to speak with you prior to the interview. Either the HR Representative or Hiring Manager may agree to spend ten minutes on the phone with you, discussing the company *and* the priorities of the available position. Again, taking this initiative demonstrates your interest and prepares you for the actual interview.

If you really want to get down to the nitty-gritty, scope out the company's annual report from an investor's point of view. After all, if you wouldn't risk your money in a company, would you want to risk your career?

Networking can be one of the best ways of gaining “unofficial” information about a company. This can be done casually (by speaking with friends and neighbors) or formally (by attending an organized networking meeting). Talking to people can result in information, contact names and job leads. Reach out to people you know, and be prepared with questions *and* your own marketing pitch!