

Tips to Research a Company

To make an impression in your cover letter, resume and interview, you should know the company, its products, its history and its future. You should also find connections to your interviewers in order to make a lasting impression. Sources for this information include the informational interviews, company website, blogs, review sites, LinkedIn and other social media, news outlets, financial websites, product review sites, competitor's websites, and industry sites.

1. Company vision and mission statement.

What are the company's future plans and aspirations? What are they trying to accomplish? Why is the company or organization in business—what are they working toward?

2. Leadership team.

Who are the key leaders in the company? Who sits on the board? What are their backgrounds and expertise?

3. Online company reviews.

Find what people are saying online about the company—customers, employees, vendors. Check Yelp, Glassdoor, social media and product review sites.

4. Products, services, and locations.

Know what the company sells/provides? Who are their main customers or clients? Where do they do business? Is it local, regional, national, international? Would you work in a satellite office or the headquarters?

5. Company history.

When and where was the company founded? Is the founder or family still involved? How large is the company? Has it changed significantly over the years? This is often found on the company website under "About Us" or "History".

6. Social media profiles.

Visit the corporate social media accounts. What do they say to their customers and what is said in return?

7. Annual/financial reports.

Annual reports tell you what is important to the company, milestones and sales projections. Financial reports give clues to the health of the company, its profits and losses, where it spends its operating cash.

8. Competition.

Who is the company's competition? How do their products/services differ? What market share does the company possess and is it growing or shrinking?

9. Industry trends.

Where is the industry going? Are there competitive, economic or social trends that will effect the company?

10. Media stories.

Look for articles online that mention the company, positively or negatively. News about awards, new leadership, product launches, mergers, expansions or layoffs may all find their way to a news story.

11. Company culture.

What are the company's values/beliefs? What is it like to work at your specific location? What is the work culture?

12. Your interviewers.

Learn as much as you can about who might be in your interviews. Try to find a common connection.

13. Your predecessor.

Who did this job previously? What skills/knowledge did they have? Why did they leave the job?

14. Your future supervisor.

Find out for whom you will work and any common ground. Some kind of connection can make you memorable.