



COMPANY RESEARCH

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A compilation organized
by TQM Consulting in association with
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Why is Company Research Important?

There are two main reasons to conduct company research:

1. To tap into the hidden job market. 90% of jobs are not advertised, so getting there before anyone else could greatly benefit your job prospects.
2. To be more informed for an interview or to decide if you want to accept a job offer. The best way to sell your skills and experience to a potential employer is to gather as much information about them as possible. This will help you get a better sense of how to best present your skills and experience to fit into their team. It also allows you to gain an edge on your competition by being more knowledgeable about the company than other applicants and perhaps demonstrating to the employer your interest by the extensive research you've done.

For more information on the Hidden Job Market please see our handouts on "Networking" and "Informational Interviews".

What tools are available for my research?

There are a variety of "tools" you can use in gathering company information. We recommend the following:

Local Newspapers / Radio / TV

There is an amazing amount of useful information to gather from these sources. Articles, programs, advertisements all have information about company expansions, new openings, changes in services or products, staffing and much more.

The Internet

This is an excellent source of company and industry information! Read further for more specific information on how to use this valuable tool.

Family, Friends and Neighbours

They are always a good source of information. Ask them what they think of the company and how their experience with them has been. Word of mouth is a considerable source of advertising for companies (good and bad).

Informational Interviews

You can gather a lot of information when you speak to valuable, informed staff members. Also, observing staff members operate may help you learn more about a company and its practices

What specific information do I gather?¹

The information you collect can be very valuable if you are able to understand, interpret and use this information effectively. Consider collecting the following information:

Industry Information

It is important to understand the industry you are applying for. Below is a list of questions that can help you gather the information you need:

- What are the industry trends and areas of growth?
- Who are the leading companies in the industry?
- What products and services are in the greatest demand?
- What new technologies are impacting the industry?

Company Business Cards & Marketing Material

The information contained in this type of material can help you gather specific details about the company including:

- Manager's names and titles
- Current addresses and postal codes
- Phone and fax numbers
- E-mails and website addresses
- Products and services

Company Websites & Search Engines

Most businesses today have a company website that has information on the company's goals, mission statement, and locale. In some cases, the website details the kind of work environment is offered and perhaps what kind of employee they're looking for. Many company websites also have their job postings listed for the convenience of potential applicants. In addition to checking the company website, you can also use search engines to find out more about the company and even related information such as testimonials, news articles, and blogs (check out page 8 for a list of search engines).

News, Press Releases & Periodicals

These can all be valuable resources for business information. Many can be found on company websites and as supplements in local city newspapers. Your local library may have an excellent selection of periodicals to browse through as well.

¹ Source: www.learnwebskills.com/company/index.html (accessed August/2009).

What do I do with the information I've gathered?

Once you have gathered this information do you know what to do with it? All of this valuable insight can now be used in the next step of approaching the company.

Informational Interviews

Conducting an informational interview, can help you gather even more specific information regarding what employers are looking for in an employee and the credentials, education and background needed.

It is important to be prepared for an interview. Having gathered the background information will allow you to “dig deeper” and show how well informed, professional and truly interested you are in being a part of their team.

Applying Directly to the Employer

Do not wait for the job to be posted! Contact the hiring manager and talk to him/her about upcoming openings and the valuable skills you have to offer. This is where your research will be an invaluable asset. You can talk about positions you would be best suited for, how you would fit with their company and the skills you can contribute to their team. This takes a lot of confidence but if you've come this far, going a little bit out of your comfort-zone could make all the difference in your employment status.

Interviews

Once you've been offered an interview, this company research is even more valuable. You can be prepared with answers that relate directly to their company. For example, if they ask “*Why do you want to work for this company?*” your answer can be “*I would really enjoy working for this company because I believe in it's success and I'd like to be a part of that. Through my research I have found that you have excellent sales and products that people really want. You have doubled your sales in the last 3 months and the projected outcomes in the coming months are outstanding....*” Though this may not be exactly what you'll say, you can see that the research and company knowledge is evident. You have shown enthusiasm and an accurate knowledge of their company and its strengths.

You can create several questions for the employer using the information you've compiled as well. For example, “*I read on your website that you're adding a new sawmill in Lumby?*” *Is this primarily where I'll be working?*” It is always important to “stand out” at the interview and make that great impression. Being prepared is the key to your success! Good luck and happy researching! ☺

For more information on informational interviews or preparing for an employment interview, please see the Handouts section of the KWSC Resource Library

Website Resources²

Below is a list of resources to help you get you started.

On-Line Yellow Page/Telephone Directories

www.411.ca

Contains the names, address and phone numbers of hundreds of thousands of businesses throughout the country. You can search by category, province and city. This also contains a “web directory” for searching the Internet.

<http://www.yellowpages.ca/>

Search for a Canadian business by business type, name and location.

search.infospace.com

A collection of look-up services for Canadian businesses, organizations and people.

www.mytelus.com/phonebook

Features Superpages’ Business Finder and People Finder directory services.

Kamloops Business Listings

www.kamloops.com

Kamloops business listings.

www.kamloopscity.com

More information about Kamloops and businesses.

<http://www.city.kamloops.bc.ca/business/selectorcriteria.shtml>

Economic snapshot

www.kamloopslife.com/business/index.html

Business directory

www.kamloops.ca/bizpal/index.shtml

Source for online business permits and licenses in Kamloops

Kamloops Business Associations

www.khbba.com

Kamloops Home-Based Business Association.

www.kamloopseast.com

Kamloops Valleyview and East Business Association.

² Source: www.quintcareers.com/researching_companies.html (accessed August/2009)

www.nsbia.com

Kamloops North Shore Business Improvement Association.

www.kcbia.com

Kamloops Central Business Improvement Association

www.venturekamloops.com

A great source of information on economic development in Kamloops including business support, attractions and expansions in our area. Their website has many industry studies and directories as well.

www.kamloopschamber.bc.ca

Kamloops Chamber of Commerce business listings

Company Information

www.cbr.ca

Canadian Business Resource offers in-depth information and profiles as well as links to more than 2,600 of Canada's top performing businesses.

www.bbb.org

Better Business Bureau website includes links to companies that are members of the organization (Canadian and American companies).

www.hoovers.com

This website offers a lot of company information – some for free, some for a fee (Canadian and American companies).

Industry Information

www.ic.gc.ca

Industry Canada, this site contains a wealth of information on national economic issues, jobs and economic growth and information on various sections of the Canadian economy.

www.virtualpet.com/industry/mfg/mfg.htm

Industry resource desk with valuable information on industries and trends (American companies).

www.industrylink.com

Industry information on over 25 different industries.

<http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/>

Bilingual library guide to top Canadian information including government and industry sites.

Newspapers / Television / Radio

www.canada.com

Links to 30 regional Canadian newspapers, free and updated daily, story finder to search news and links to financial news and information.

<http://www.newswire.ca/en/>

Provides access to Canadian company, industry and general press releases, company snapshots and annual reports of Canadian public companies.

www.cbc.ca

Canadian news, television and radio information.

www.statcan.ca

Canadian statistics, publications and virtual library.

<http://canada.gc.ca/home.html>

Main access point to information about Canada, government, services and links to other departments and agencies.

www.kamloopsnews.ca

Kamloops Daily News on-line.

www.kamloopsthisweek.com

Kamloops This Week on-line.

www.cfjctv.com

CFJC TV Channel 7 news stories.

www.ckrv.com

The River 97.5 FM Radio Station news stories.

www.98.3cifm.com

98.3 CIFM Radio Station news stories.

Search Engines

www.altavista.com

www.looksmart.com

www.askjeeves.com

www.lycos.com

www.dogpile.com

www.msn.com

www.gigablast.com

www.netscape.com

www.google.ca

www.teoma.com

www.hotbot.com

www.yahoo.com