

FINDING A GOOD FIT: HOW TO RESEARCH YOUR POTENTIAL EMPLOYER



In job searching and career exploration, it is important to research your potential employer to determine if the company or organization's culture, goals and ethics align with your own. Here are some helpful tips on how to research an employer so you can make informed decisions.

Company Website: This should be a first step and is the simplest way to see how a company presents itself. Thoroughly explore the company's website; read their mission and values statements.

Industry Journals/Local Papers: What is the "buzz" on this company—what are others saying and writing about this company? Look for articles about the employer through local, national and international media sources by researching the online databases such as *LexisNexis Academic*. As a current student, you have access to this database for free through Penrose Library both in the library and through remote access. Alumni have access as well, but you must be in Penrose Library to utilize this database.

Better Business Bureau: Find out if the company is accredited by the BBB and other information about its performance at www.us.bbb.org

Career Information/Job Search Websites: There are a lot of websites where you can get general statistics on a company: Glassdoor.com, Hoovers, BusinessWeek's Company Insight Center, and <http://sec.gov/edgar.shtml> for information on public companies.

LinkedIn is also wonderful, free source of information on companies and the people employed by them. It features its own employer listings, plus bios (written by none other than the great men and women themselves, or people willing to try to sound like them) that will show you the leadership team members' past roles and educational histories and their contact information as well. You can figure out which DU alums work at the companies you are researching, and reach out to them for an information interview.

You can also find a variety of blogs and message boards about employees' experiences working with companies, but take these with a grain of salt. One person's experience does not always speak to how the company operates. Try to formulate a bigger picture by using all of the research tools.

Informational Interview: If you know someone who works for the company or has worked for it in the past, consider asking them about their experience. If you don't know someone directly, network to find a contact in the company and talk to them about their position, how they got there and what it is like to work for that employer. For more information on how to network and conduct informational interviews go to our website or pick up tip sheets.