

## Before Applying - Research the Hiring Organization

Ever find yourself in the situation where you “*just gotta make a change*” and jump on the first opportunity that comes along? Ever do that and regret it?

Failure to take the time to do some basic homework on potential employers may cause you to miss out on a terrific opportunity at a great company. The interview is more than just selling your skills and accomplishments for the position - it’s also a chance to impress on your interviewers that you already identify with their organization. In other words, think broader than just the immediate job, and get this message across in cover letters and interviews.

Learn as much as you can about the organization, and then pitch yourself in terms that are germane to the hiring company. Impress the interviewers that you already know, and align with, their organization. Hiring managers are more likely to remember candidates who are able to articulate insightful knowledge and understanding of the organization as opposed to those who convey only superficial trivia.

The other significant downside of not researching your target employers is that if you are successful in being hired (congratulations), you may later find that the organization was not as good a choice as you initially thought (condolences). Accepting an offer without doing your homework is akin to agreeing to marriage after only a single blind date. Can it work? Yes. What is the chance of it working? Slim.

So take time to research the organization to which you are applying. Study its financial

statements, know its products and services, identify its competitors, understand its markets, know its customers and its customers’ needs, learn its short and long term plans for growth and expansion, and anything else you can find.

Especially try to learn about the culture or the organization and its overall management style. Ask yourself if this is the type of organization that fits with your style and interests.

Remember, you will be spending over a third of your life with your new-found colleagues within the walls of this institution.

But before we

scare you into the dark depths of a research library, we’re not talking about days and days of analysis. Today, newspapers, magazines, news radio, business television, and the Internet are jammed with information on most organizations, save for the smaller, private and closely-held boutiques.

Leverage your network to try to get names of past and present employees. Ask what they like or dislike about the organization if they are still there. Ask former employees why they left. Thirty-minutes-to-an-hour at most is all you should need to cull the essential information about the organization.

Do your homework now to help impress hiring managers and win the job of your dreams, and also avoid that “*What the heck was I thinking?*” reaction later.

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**In their over-anxiousness to find a new job, you’d be surprised at how many job seekers go about the search process blindly when it comes to knowing even the basics about their target employers. There are two huge downsides to this, and one easy way to avoid them.**