Why to Research an Employer

Becoming knowledgeable about a potential employer not only helps you to explore and evaluate your interest in working for them, it is also essential to writing a focused cover letter and preparing successfully for a job or informational interview. The following tips and resource lists will assist you in deciding what to look for and how to find it.

What to Look For

Here is a list of questions to consider when researching potential employers:

1) Where are the main office/headquarters and division offices located?
2) What is the company’s/organization’s gross annual sales?
3) What is the company’s market share?
4) What are some of its major products and services?
5) Who are its competitors?
6) How does the company fare in relation to its competitors?
7) Is the company financially stable? Why or why not?
8) What is the company history? When was it founded and by whom?
9) Who is the parents company (if any)?
10) What are the industry trends and how might they affect this particular organization?
11) What are the company’s future plans for expansion, new product or service development, new locations, or the international market?
12) What is the organization’s history in terms of reorganization, re-engineering, downsizing, etc.?
13) What is/are the philosophy/values of this company?
14) What is the organization’s reputation in terms of employment practices, affirmative action, promotion from within, professional development?
15) What are some position titles and descriptions?
16) How do the company’s salaries compare with local market rate salaries?
17) Who are the managers/leaders in the departments that interest you?

Where to Look

Career Services Center Resource Library – UC 5th Floor

Our resources include many up-to-date books, magazines, newspapers, government publications, and directories for identifying and researching Bay Area, national, and international employers. Below is a partial list of our resources. Ask at the CSC front desk for assistance.

The Book of Lists – SF and Santa Clara Counties (ask at front desk)
Consultants & Consulting Organizations Directories (2 vols.)
The Directory of Business Information Resources
Directory of Foreign Firms Operating in the U.S.
Directory of Americans Firms Operating in Foreign Countries
Hidden Job Market
Hoover’s Handbook of World Business
JobBank Guide to Computer & High Tech Companies
Jobs & Careers with Non-profit Organizations
Media Companies
Minority Organizations
Northern California Business Directory
Plunkett’s Employers’ Internet Sites with Careers Information
San Francisco Bay Area Job Bank
Social Service Referral Directory
Sports Marketplace
The Sports Business Directory
Top 2,500 Employers
The Vault Reports Guide to the Top Consulting Firms

Career Services Center Website

Visit our homepage at www.usfca.edu/career for links to individual employer websites, as well as websites with extensive information on many companies. Click on Employer Services/Company Web Site Links to find information about local, national, and international companies and organizations.

Gleeson Library Reference Department, 1st Floor

Gleeson’s Reference Department houses a large collection of hard-copy reference books, as well as a variety of online databases. You can search databases or Ignacio (the on-line catalog of books) throughout the library’s homepage at www.usfca.edu/library. For help in formulating your search strategies, or for more information.
on dialing in from an off-campus computer, consult a reference Librarian in person or call 422-2039.

Library Reference Database
A number of reference databases are available to help you search for journal or newspaper articles relating to employers. You may print your results, download your citations to a disk, or send results to an email address.

To begin your search, go to [www.usfca.edu/library](http://www.usfca.edu/library) and click on Reference Databases. From the Subject List, click on Business to view those databases containing business information. Following are the main business-oriented databases:

- **ABI/Inform Global** (through ProQuest) – Some full-text, some abstracts, and some citations to articles that have appeared in newspapers, magazines, and journals. Overlaps with Business Index ASAP, but has more of a management focus and more international coverage.
- **American Business Disc/Reference USF** – Directory information for publicly and privately owned companies in the U.S.
- **Business Index ASAP** (through Info Trac Web) – Full-text, some abstracts, and some citations to articles that have appeared in newspapers, magazines, and journals. Overlaps with ABI/Inform.
- **Dow Jones Interactive** – Executive summaries or detailed reports of companies. Includes full financial information for the past 4 years. Some company-to-industry comparisons.
- **San Francisco Chronicle** – Full-text of Chronicle articles
- **Sport Discus** – Comprehensive, international database of sports and fitness literature.
- **STAT-USA** – Created by U.S. Department of Commerce. Contains a wealth of information, including market research reports filed at U.S. embassies worldwide & National Trade Data Bank import/export statistics.

Periodical Indexes
In addition to the library’s web-based indexes, there are still some hard copy and CD-ROM indexes. Consult a reference librarian for assistance.

Corporate Annual Reports
The most recent annual reports and 10-K’s(earning statements) of over 1,500 companies are shelved near the entrance to the Reference Department. A retrospective collection on microfiche for over 2,500 companies is also available. Online annual reports are available through [http://www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml](http://www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml)

Reference Directories
Following is a list of some of the most relevant directories located in Gleeson’s Reference Department. Please check Ignacio (the on-line catalog) for call numbers. Company profiles are U.S.-based unless otherwise stated.

- **The Almanac of American Employers**
- **The career Guide: Dun’s Employment Opportunities** (includes info of U.S. businesses)
- **CorpTech Directory of Technology Companies**
- **D&B Directory of Service Companies**
- **D&B Regional Business Directory, San Francisco Area**
- **D&B Million Dollar Directory** (leading U.S. public & private companies)
- **Dun’s Asia/Pacific Key Business Enterprises**
- **Encyclopedia of Business Information Sources** (source books, periodicals, organizations, handbooks, etc., related to many occupations)
- **Forbes 500’s Annual Directory** (U.S. companies)
- **Hoover’s Billion Dollar Directory** (public companies)
- **Hoover’s Handbook of Private Companies**
- **Hoover’s Handbook of Emerging Companies**
- **Hoover’s Handbook of American Business**
- **Job Seeker’s Guide to Socially Responsible Companies**
- **Peterson’s Job Opportunities: Business**
- **The Professional’s Job Finder**
- **Red Chip Review** (small cap companies-Western U.S.)
- **San Francisco Country Commerce & Industry Directory**
- **Standard and Poor’s Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives – 3 vols.** (U.S. and international)
- **Standard Directory of Advertising Agencies**
- **Thomas’ Register of American Manufacturers** (23 vols. – lists by manufacturer or product/service)

Moody’s Manuals
All contain brief company history/financial information

- Bank and Finance Manual
- Industrial News Reports
- Industry Review
- International News Reports
- OTC (over-the-counter) Industrial Manual
- OTC Unlisted News Reports
- Public Utility Manual
- Transportation Manual

When in doubt, ask a Reference Librarian!