

Finding and Researching Employers

A successful job search lands you a position that really suits you—a job where you enjoy the work and the employer, that serves as a stepping stone in your career, and that positively affects your lifestyle. This may sound like a tall order, but it's much easier to make this happen if you effectively identify and research employers before you begin your actual job search. By doing so you can:

- Focus on employers that best suit you;
- Make a stronger impression as a job candidate;
- Gain an important edge on your competition.

There are millions of employers in the United States. Some are very large businesses; most are small and mid-sized businesses; more than 80,000 are government entities; and over a million are nonprofits. But how do you discover the employers that are of greatest interest to you? The way you locate and research employers will depend largely on their type and size.

The first part of this sheet provides pointers for identifying prospective employers. The second part provides guidelines and specific resources for your in-depth employer research, with sub-sections on businesses, governments, and nonprofits.

Specific Resources

Career Libraries in Cornell Career Services (career.cornell.edu... Resources) Each college career office has resources relating to employers specific to the college's specialties.

In addition, the career library in 103 Barnes Hall has many useful resources on all types of employers. Search the database at career.cornell.edu. On the Career Library page, select "Search Barnes Career Library." Use the key-word box for searches. For example, use the key word "**employer**" along with a word such as "business," "international," "nyc," "research," "finance," "education," "Boston," "government," "think tank," "arts," "Canada," "legal," "environment," etc.

CCS Link Library

(career.cornell.edu... Resources... Link Library) This resource includes links to over 800 researched and catalogued websites. You can find employers grouped by location, size, career field, etc.

CUELINKS

(cuelinks.cornell.edu) A university-wide online networking platform where community members can connect with the people and resources they need to achieve academic, career, and personal goals.

Cornell Library System

(library.cornell.edu) Reference librarians in the many campus libraries are there to help you. Many of the libraries have specialized holdings, linked to particular career fields.

Professional Associations

Many professional associations offer student memberships at a nominal rate. Benefits vary, but can include access to members and attendance at conferences, each of which can help you identify employers and contacts.

LinkedIn

(*LinkedIn.com*) Create a professional profile in LinkedIn and join groups that interest you. Keep an eye on conversation threads and job postings that may provide great leads on job opportunities. Be strategic in expanding your network.

Job-Posting Sites

A less direct but often effective way to identify employers is to search for job postings according to your career and geographic interests. Even if the posted jobs require different experience than you now have, you still can get the contact information for employers to ask about entry-level positions for which you are qualified.

General Guidelines for Conducting Research

After you have created a list of potential employers that interest you, what do you need to learn about an employer and how do you go about it?

- If it's a business, what is its product or service? How is it performing? If it's a government entity, what is its purpose or role? If it's a nonprofit organization, what is its mission or cause?
- The employer's website is usually a good source of information and can help you decide if the organization appeals to you. The *Vault Guides* found at CareerInsider are also useful; access is available through the CCS website.

- It is often helpful to do some research on the employer's competition. This would be especially true for businesses, since competition is a key issue in the private sector.
- If you are considering interning or working for the employer, it's smart to find position descriptions to help you determine if the work they offer would interest you.
- You can sometimes find reviews/comments on the employer made by outside organizations. Use a search engine such as Google.
- “Insider information” can also be extremely helpful. Use Glassdoor or develop network contacts (see Professional Associations above and networking contacts below) to find people who work for the employer or who otherwise have knowledge.

Comprehensive Resources

There are many excellent resources for conducting your employer research project. Here are some examples.

For identifying and researching business employers:

Buzzfile

(career.cornell.edu) An advanced company information database, covering over 18,000 industries and 18 million employers. Students can research thousands of potential employers and discover employment opportunities that are suitable for graduates from their majors.

Mergent Intellect

(mergentintellect.com/index.php/search/index)

Provides information on more than 20 million public and private employers—overviews, product/brand name listings, competitors, officer names and salaries, product segmentation data, subsidiaries, and financial data.

For identifying and researching nonprofit employers:

Idealist.org

(idealist.org) Provides information on more than 82,000 nonprofit organizations in the U.S. and abroad. It is searchable by area of focus, location, and key word; and it usually provides name of a contact person.

For identifying and researching government employers:

USA.gov

(usa.gov) Provides an A-Z agency index for the federal government as well as links to all governments at the state, local, and tribal levels. Visit their website at usa.gov/Agencies/federal.shtml.

For identifying networking contacts:

Take advantage of programming offered by Cornell Career Services on networking. Considering joining Cornell communities in online networking sites such as CUElinks and LinkedIn to identify Cornell alumni willing to provide career advice.