

# COMPANY RESEARCH

## RATIONALE

Why do almost all interviewers ask you why you are interested in their company? Well, before you would buy a new car, wouldn't you ask the dealer a lot of questions to make sure the car really meets your specifications – and has the things YOU are looking for? Before employers make a decision to invest in you – both in time and money – they want to make sure you are a good fit – for the position and the company. This question is important to them because it allows them to sort out those students who are really interested and enthused about the company. You will more likely be invited back for a second round interview and more likely to receive an offer when you can enthusiastically showcase that:

- You've researched the company well *[this shows you are motivated and interested]*
- There are connections between the company and your own background/interests *[this shows "fit"]*

## IN PRACTICE

When you research large companies you'll find their web site is HUGE and you can spend hours going through it. What's most important, however, is that you focus on a few things that really stand out to you, impress you, or connect with you. Choose three different things that you can talk about, and be sure to also think through why those aspects of the company are important to you.

Here's an example:

<b>COMPANY</b> ←	↔	<b>STUDENT</b>
<p><b>Product Line:</b> Owns 22 consumer food product brands with annual sales of over \$1 billion and 19 brands with annual sales over \$500 million</p>	<b>1</b>	<p>I grew up eating your brand of jams and jellies and now also buy your natural peanut butter. Doing my research, I was amazed to find all the other food products you are associated with and realized I have been also eating those for years.</p>
<p><b>Social responsibility:</b> Focuses on sustainability in every stage of every product's cycle – manufacturing to delivery - and sets quality standards for suppliers</p>	<b>2</b>	<p>I also noticed the initiatives you have taken to be more sustainable. I am a member of NetImpact on campus and want to work for a company that has an aggressive sustainability initiative. In our house, we recycle all our paper, cardboard, metal, and glass; and we buy products made from recycled materials.</p>
<p><b>Core Values:</b> Quality People – offers best-in-class training, mentoring, &amp; coaching &amp; helps develop individuals' careers</p>	<b>3</b>	<p>I also believe that the highest quality people produce the highest quality products and services. Last summer I worked as a landscaper and I found that when I worked on a project with other workers who cared about the project, it always turned out better than we expected and we were so proud of what we accomplished.</p>

## EFFECTIVE RESEARCH CAN MAKE YOU STAND OUT:

- **100%** of interviewees will have visited the company's web site.
- **75%** of interviewees will have done the above and read the company's annual report.
- **50%** of interviewees will have done all of the above and read the annual reports of a minimum of three competitors of the company.
- **25%** of interviewees will have done all of the above, and read at least three articles within the past month regarding the company (Business Week, Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, Web Site publications, etc).
- **10%** of interviewees will have specifically researched the company from the perspective of their specialization - knowing how this company sets itself apart in marketing, finance, operations, logistics, IT or other functional areas. This shows a real connection between one function of the company and the students major.
- **5%** of interviewees will have done all of the above, and memorized the names of each member of the company's executive team and board of directors, while also learning where each went to college.

### Where will you be?

**Jeff Rice,**  
Executive Director,  
Office of Career Management

## Use the following questions as you research a company and jot down some notes to help you get organized and focus:

1. This is what I genuinely like about the company:

---

---

---

2. I was impressed to learn about:

---

---

---

3. Why I feel connected to this company:

---

---

---

4. Three things I can talk about to show I know about and care about the company:

---

---

---

## WHERE TO DO COMPANY RESEARCH

**WEBSITES** - Employer's Website, News.google.com, Bloomberg.com, Money.cnn.com, Businessweek.com, LinkedIn, Glassdoor.com, TheMuse.com/companies - NOT Wikipedia

**TALK TO PEOPLE** - Use LinkedIn to search thousands of Fisher alumni in your area of interest and in different cities around the world. Also be sure to start connecting with employers at Fisher career fairs.

**USE YOUR NETWORK** - Perhaps you know or could connect with someone who has worked at a particular position, company or industry. Examples include: family, friends, parents' friends, friends' parents, roommates, classmates, alumni, fraternity/sorority, student organizations, church, and community.

**OSU LIBRARY** - Business Resources (Specifically for OSU Business Students): [http://guides.osu.edu/job\\_interview](http://guides.osu.edu/job_interview). The library web page has resources sorted to help research companies and to prepare for interviews.

### TIPS

- Mention your sources and make sure they are credible
- Ask positive questions and show excitement – an interviewer never wants to defend their company in an interview
- Avoid memorizing facts. When you feel a real connection to the information, you will easily remember what you want to say
- Don't ask a prospective employer questions that could easily be answered by doing your research

**REMEMBER: COMPANY RESEARCH TAKES TIME** – *But* it can differentiate you in an interview!

## WHAT TO RESEARCH:

### MISSION/VALUES

#### PAST

- Company history
- Analysis of past few years

#### PRESENT

- Current financial status
- Company's reputation
- Any changes taking place
- Recent news articles

#### FUTURE

- Outlook for company growth
- New products/services

### COMPANY BASICS

- Private/Public
- Subsidiaries/Parent Companies

### COMPANY SUCCESSES

#### PRODUCT

- Company's products and/or services
- Industry trends
- % of market share

#### PEOPLE

- Customers/Clients
- Major competitors
- Industry leaders
- Company focus on its employees
- Number of employees
- Organizational structure
- Key people (Owner, CEO)

#### LOCATION

- Local, national, international
- Location of headquarters
- Locations where you might be working