



## JOB AND CAREER ADVICE

# WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN TO 'DO YOUR HOMEWORK' ON A COMPANY?

We've all heard it's important to do your homework on a company prior to your interview. But what does that really mean?

Today I'll explore some tips for planning for your interview.

The internet has certainly changed how we learn about companies. Since information is so readily available, employers expect you to come in better prepared than ever.

Start by visiting the company's website. Read some of their press releases. Read their mission statement and other information regarding their products or services. Print off some of those web pages, highlighting or circling key information you'd like to discuss during your interview.

Use LinkedIn to see who you know who presently works at the company. Ask them about corporate culture, their overall happiness and/or concerns about the company, etc. Depending on how well you know this person, you might be surprised at how much information you're able to obtain.

Look up your interviewer on LinkedIn to learn more about them. How long have they been with the company? Where had they previously worked? Where did they go to school? Are they

active as a volunteer? Perhaps you share some of the same community interests.

If you dig enough you may be able to find the past few people who'd held the position for which you're interviewing. To do this, keep the same job title, but use LinkedIn's filtered search select "former company" and deselect "current company." This should give you a search result for people holding the correct title, but for whom that company is a former employer of theirs.

Sticking with LinkedIn for a moment, conduct a search to find people you know who used to work there. Ask what they liked – or didn't like – about the company. Be sure to ask them why they left.

Check Hoover's or other outlets to gather strategic information about the company. Feel free to check on Glassdoor or other sites to read what employees have to say. Just remember to take anonymous comments with a grain of salt. If anything, try to verify – or refute – those comments by talking with friends who used to work there.

When you show up for your interview, take a look around their lobby. Pay attention to awards or other special items on display. They might not only provide talking points during the interview, but they can also provide a glimpse into the organization's interests/values.

If you have friends in the staffing industry, ask them about the company's reputation among staffing professionals. Is there high turnover? Is company management difficult to deal with? If you're pretty friendly with the recruiter, ask them whether they'd want to go to work there.

While today's blog centers around doing homework on a company, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention other forms of "homework."

Reread your resume. Imagine how embarrassed you'd be if asked about something on there and you weren't sure what they were talking about. Prepare good interview questions and take time to think through how you'd want to answer some of the more common and/or difficult questions.

Doing your homework is more than just knowing what product or service a company provides. I hope today's blog has given you some additional areas to consider. Good luck!

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