

What do you know about this Company?

This is a very popular interview question and when answered well is a great way to mark you out from other job applicants. Employers are interested in establishing what you know about their company as it helps them determine:

- a) *How interested you are in working for the company.* Making the wrong decision reflects very poorly on a recruitment manager and they will do everything possible to minimise this risk. By showing a genuine interest in the company, you will position yourself as a credible applicant with a desire to succeed, fit in and develop with the role.
- b) *Your commercial awareness.* By demonstrating in interview that you have extensively researched the company and have taken the time to understand their positioning in the marketplace, their key business drivers and the commercial pressures they face – you will show your ability to think outside the box and the value added you are bringing to the organisation.

Researching the company

These days, most of your research can be done on line. Dedicate a minimum of two to three hours to your research; the more senior the position the more thorough your research should be.

Website:

The majority of companies have websites which give detailed information on the company background, clients, specialist areas etc. If the website has financial statements published, analyse these to get a picture of how the company has been performing over the past few years.

Many websites have a section dedicated to published articles and media. Again scour these to get information on the most up to date corporate news and developments.

On line newspaper articles

Put the company name into a search engine to find articles on the company and its competitors. It may also be useful to access relevant trade journals as these can be invaluable in terms of getting a comparative analysis between all companies in the sector. Try to develop a picture of the company's position in the market place and the opportunities and threats it faces.

Industry Trends

Why not do a wider search to pull up information on international trends in the sector? For example if you are interviewing for a position in a pharmaceutical company, you could research international trends in generic drugs. This is currently a very topical issue in the media and would present you as a candidate who was interested in current market trends and aware of future challenges.

Competitor Analysis

Who are the main competitors, what is their market share? Is the industry going through a consolidation? Are there likely to be mergers and acquisitions?

Research the interview panel

Know who is interviewing you. Get their names, job titles and research their background through the company website, linked in or simply inputting their name into a search engine. If you are going through a recruitment agency, they should be able to assist you in accessing this information.

Conclusion:

Your knowledge about the company will help to present you as a commercially minded individual who understands the business and the issues it is facing. Answering this question well, could help you stand out from the crowd and make you invaluable in the eyes of an employer.

About the Author

Laura McGrath is the owner of [Interview Techniques](http://www.interviewtechniques.ie), a leading provider of interview coaching services. She has spent the last 15 years in staffing and recruitment and is a regular contributor with *Irish Jobs* and the *Sunday Business Post*.

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