

Researching a company

In any interview, the one question you can be guaranteed is “What do you know about our company?” Answering this question well, can help differentiate you from other job applicants and will place you as someone who wants to fit in to their corporate culture.

Why do employers ask this question?

Interviewers want to be reassured that you’re not looking for any old job, but instead want *this* job in *this* company. Recruiting the wrong person is an expensive mistake and as such you’ll be tested on both your interest in the company and the position. By showing that you’ve dedicated time to researching the company, you’ll present yourself as an individual who’s taking the interview process seriously.

How deeply do you need to research the company?

This really depends on your level of seniority. For executive positions, you may need to spend days gathering information on the company, its competitors and market environment. For a graduate entry role, one to two hours may be enough.

How do I research a company?

- 1 Website: This is the most obvious starting point. Most medium to large companies have websites which contain invaluable information.
- 2 Financial Journals/Press: As most job applicants will spend some time browsing the company website, to stand out from the crowd you’ll need to go the extra mile. The easiest way to do this is to google the company name followed by “Irish Times”, “Irish Independent”, “Financial Times” or any trade journal that may be appropriate. You’ll be able to access recent activities of the company that may not have yet appeared in their website.
- 3 LinkedIn: Find out who is interviewing you – both their name and job title and search for them on LinkedIn. Knowing the background of your interviewer may help you make a connection with them in interview (you may have studied in the same university) and could also give you an indication as to their line of questioning in interview.
- 4 Recruitment Consultants: If you have secured the interview through a recruitment consultant, use their knowledge to help give you a winning edge. They should know of recent developments in the company, why the role has been created, culture in the department, types of personality that fit in best to the culture. Tap them for as much information as possible.

Conclusion:

The easiest way for you to prove your worth and interest to a prospective employer is by understanding who they are and the challenges they're facing in the market. Developing a more intimate understanding of them will also help shift the power dynamics of the interview, placing you on more of an equal footing with the interviewer. Happy interviewing!

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 *Recruit Ireland* and the *Sunday Business Post*.

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