Research and Target Yourself to Prospective Employers

Employer market research is the secret weapon of successful job candidates. Here's how to find out the problems the company you want to work for needs to solve and how to position yourself as the solution.

RESEARCH YOUR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER

The Basics	
TIP: As you seek out information about your target companies, think about ways you can contribute, add value, and solve problems.	
History	
Values, mission, and culture	
Leaders, customers, stakeholders, employees	
Products, services, and source of income	
Latest news	
Main competitors	
Industry trends and leaders	

SWOT Analysis

Identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for the company and/or your potential department.

TIP: Focus on the level of detail that is most appropriate. For higher-level roles or startups, you should work to understand the overall company's problems. For entry- and mid-level roles, focus on the specific function, the broader department, or division you're interested in.

Again, think about ways you can contribute, add value, and solve problems.

Strengths	
Weaknesses	
Opportunities	
Threats	

The Ideal Employee

TIP: Review and analyze job postings to understand what employers advertise about positions you want. Use a "word cloud" app (e.g., wordclouds.com) to create a picture of the terms used to describe the skills and requirements and mirror these terms in your communication.

Desired skills	
Job requirements	

#1: WRITE A PROBLEM STATEMENT FOR A PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER.

- ☐ Articulate your customer's wants and needs.
- ☐ Spell out their top pain points.

STEP 1: THE PROBLEM.

Summarize the current situation and challenges for whatever level is most appropriate, such as the specific function, the broader department, or division you're interested in or for higher-level roles or startups, the overall company.

What are the goals, wants, and needs?

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_____
_____
_____

Who do these problems and issues affect (key stakeholders)?

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_____

STEP 2: THE DESIRED OUTCOME.

Describe some of the benefits of solving the problem.

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_____
_____
_____

STEP 3: THE ANSWER.

Propose potential solutions that you can offer.

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_____
_____
_____

#2: FOLLOW AND ENGAGE WITH YOUR TARGET COMPANIES AND THEIR LEADERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

☐ Begin liking, sharing, and commenting on updates that best support your personal brand.

#3: PUT YOUR PROBLEM STATEMENT TO USE WHEN:

☐ Applying for jobs

☐ Interviewing

☐ Networking

☐ Adding LinkedIn connections or cold pitching yourself to the appropriate contacts at your target companies

TIPS:

- Be sure to create a unique Problem Statement tailored to each potential employer you plan to apply to work with.

#4: SET UP INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS AND INFORMAL MEETINGS OR CALLS WITH PROFESSIONALS FROM YOUR TARGET EMPLOYERS TO GATHER INSIGHTS AS PART OF YOUR RESEARCH.