

Know about your company, your job

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Lee Tae-hyung, a recruiting official at the Export-Import Bank of Korea, says he is quite impressed with today's applicants. Compared with their counterparts five years ago, most are better aware of the company's business structure, future plans and even its financial profile. These applicants also show fairly good understanding of the jobs offered, he adds.

"I think it is mainly because of the Internet. Companies now provide a lot of information on their Web sites so job seekers can easily find out about companies and jobs," Lee said.

Researching a company is essential preparation for an interview, and its Web site is the obvious first source of information. But browsing a company Web site may not be as painless as surfing the Web for 10 minutes.

"The information provided is obviously a huge amount. Only if you know the contents of the Web site well, I think, will you be adequately prepared to apply for a job with the company," Lee added.

From its mission statement to frequently asked questions, each company's site contains a wide range of corporate information. For more efficiency in pre-application research, focusing on certain aspects is necessary, job seekers here say.

"Preparing for job interviews, I mainly tried to learn about their products and business strategies from their Web sites. I think employers always ask questions about such facts," said Zoo Ha-na, a 26-year-old woman who now works for a local IT solution company. "In my opinion, the key is getting familiar with the important business issues for the company," she added.

Lee stresses that using other resources can double efficiency. "Many successful candidates here say reading news articles about our bank really helped deepen their background knowledge," the recruitment official said. He advises job seekers to take advantage of recent in-depth articles on a company to strengthen their knowledge.

"If you prepare for a company job over several months, following company-related news during that period will be helpful. Such activities will give you a deeper understanding of the job you are applying for," Lee added.

Many experts say job seekers should also learn more about the job. "Gaining knowledge about a company itself is not enough. That can be helpful in one job interview. But for your entire career plan, you had better do more thorough research on the specific job you want," said Kim Neung-joo, senior consultant at the Yonsei University Job Center.

Kim says researching jobs is not so different from researching companies. It involves the same methods, such as visiting Web sites, reading corporate news and talking to people who already work there. But the focus should be different, he stressed.

"You should ask first how you can build your lifetime career. Check the job descriptions on each company's Web site and carefully examine a company's training system and human resources policies.

"Landing a job is important to a job seeker. But if you do not put in enough thought about what specific job you will take, you may soon get disillusioned with your work and opt for frequent job-hopping. It can even ruin your entire career plan," he added.

Some employers are making efforts during the recruitment process to help job seekers gain this understanding.

"Our company believes the best applicants are those who know well what exactly they do at work. Background knowledge of the company can be a merit as well. But we still put the highest value on each candidate's understanding of a job position," said Oh Chang-seop, human resources manager of CJ Corp, the nation's leading food company.

The company's Web site (www.cj.co.kr) includes a section called "Realistic Job Review," which provides detailed job descriptions for prospective employees, Oh said.

By Kim Tae-gyun (ktg1217@heraldm.com)

Get the Lowdown

A bit of homework makes all the difference in your job interview

For the serious job seeker, doing your homework on a company before you go into an interview isn't optional. It's a necessary part of positioning yourself to get the job.

"We don't want just a warm body. We don't want someone who's here just to get a paycheck," said Bea Ludwig, human resources coordinator for Kaiser Permanente. "Why would we hire someone to provide care to patients if they don't even care enough to do some research before coming in to talk to me?"

Ludwig suggests some ways to do that homework:

- Visit the company's Web site on the Internet.
- Check out the library.
- Network.
- Call the human resources department to request recruiting brochures.

The amount or type of information you know isn't even the top priority, Ludwig said. "It's just impressive if their knowledge of something about the company shows why they want to be here. If they say, 'I believe in this company because I know you're involved in these charities,' then fine. The motivation is often different, but it's good to know that something about us is important to them."

"The best thing a person can do is talk to someone who works there already, who knows what the vision and culture is like," said John Rice, personnel relations manager for Burns & McDonnell International, who recruits architects, engineers and scientists. "Study that information like it's the final exam in calculus," he said. "Part of initiative is doing homework. And when you're hiring, you're looking for someone who has some initiative. You're also looking for a certain level of confidence. Having done your homework both builds confidence and reduces the fear factor of the interview."

By Sue Dye Babson
Chicago Tribune

The Job Interview

The job interview is a strategic conversation with a purpose. Your goal is to persuade the employer that you have the skills, background, and ability to do the job and that you can comfortably fit into his/her organization. At the same interview, you should also be gathering information about the job, future career opportunities and the organization, to determine if the job and work environment are right for you. You can strongly influence the interview outcome if you realize that an interview is not an objective process in which the employer offers the job to the best candidate based on merit alone. But rather, an interview is a highly subjective encounter in which the interviewer offers the job to the qualified person whom he likes best. Personality, confidence, enthusiasm, a positive outlook and excellent interpersonal and communication skills count heavily.

One key to success is to use every means at your disposal to develop effective interviewing skills: selective presentation of your background, thoughtful answers to typical interview questions, well researched questions about the organization, and an effective strategy to market yourself. There is no magic to interviewing: it is a skill that can be learned and improved upon with practice.

A **second key** to success is careful research about the job and the organization, agency, or company with whom you are having the interview. You can request printed materials such as annual reports from the employer in advance or use library resources. You should also talk with your contacts in the organization or use your personal network to discover the names of current employees you might call prior to the interview. Knowing about the job will help you prepare a list of your qualifications so that you can show, point by point, why you are the best candidate. Knowing about the employer will help you prepare an interview strategy and appropriate questions and points to emphasize.

http://resource.educationamerica.net/i_tips1.html