

## Industry, Company, & Position Research

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The following **Research Resources** will guide you in learning about jobs, job descriptions, and requirements, for the jobs, career fields, and/or industries you might be interested in.

**Be sure to set aside the time necessary to research properly.** It's important to note that this research does take time. If it's not possible for you to set aside several hours at one time, break it up into dedicated 20-minute blocks. Dedicate each block to researching a different part of the company. Whatever works best for you, but be sure you dedicate the time to do this step right.

**Keep an open mind**, and spend some time researching positions and/or fields that may be a good fit for you. You can start with something as simple as a Google search for 'career change nurse' or 'alternative career lawyer'. This will get you started with a simple understanding of what else may be out there.

Don't be afraid to stretch the limits of what you can do, and consider how it applies to anything you find that seems like even a partial fit for your career 'wants' list. Wander 'down the rabbit hole' a bit and see what you can uncover.

**The point of this exercise** is to find actual positions that you (a) are interested in, and (b) feel at least partially qualified for. (Later, we will work to narrow it down so that (ideally) your options fall within no more than 3 career areas.)

### Industry Research

To understand the type of company you want to work for, you may want to start by building a list of industries that best suit your knowledge, skills, and interests.

- The Bureau of Labor has compiled a [comprehensive list of industries](#) to start with
- Global Industry Classification Standards (GICS) can also be a helpful resource. If you're unfamiliar, this link may be helpful:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global\\_Industry\\_Classification\\_Standard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Industry_Classification_Standard)
- **Standard & Poor's GICS** - [https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/documents/112727-gics-mapbook\\_2018\\_v3\\_letter\\_digitalspreads.pdf](https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/documents/112727-gics-mapbook_2018_v3_letter_digitalspreads.pdf)
- **MSCI's GICS** - <https://www.msci.com/gics>
- **IBIS World** (<https://www.ibisworld.com/>) - Industry market research, reports, & statistics; includes a fairly comprehensive listing of different industries
- **Read Profession & Industry-Specific Blogs** – You can tell a lot by reading industry-specific blogs. Do you find them interesting? Do you enjoy learning more and more about the most important trends and topics within the profession?



## *Company Research*

Since you'll be looking for something that make you happy, not just a stop-gap, you may want to research local companies to find out if there is a particular organization you'd like to work for.

You can start by exploring [Indeed's Best Places to Work](#) pages (navigate by industry and company ratings to find a variety of organizations that will fit with your new goals). You can also perform Google searches for things like 'best places to work 2020', etc.

Look for companies that share your values. Look for a fit with the company culture or their mission/vision/values – whatever is most important to you – to ensure they have clear goals that resonate with your interests and passions.

### **Learn about the company's business operations.**

How does the company make money? Who buys their products or services and are they highly rated? Is the company a start-up, or if it's been in business for a while, how has it grown over time? What industry is this company in? The answers to these questions will give you an idea of how stable this business is, what some of their immediate concerns might be, and how you could play a part in their success.

For public companies, you can get this information from the company website as well as access certain financial information, office locations, and learn how the company is structured. Public companies typically post annual reports and other public financial documents online. You can also consult resources like [Crunchbase](#) to learn about funding, mergers and acquisitions, as well as the competitive landscape.

Look out for information that will help you answer questions about the industry and how the company you're researching could pull ahead or maintain their lead.

### **Research the company's leadership**

When a company captures your interest, you should get to know who is leading the way. Research the employees who hold respected positions within the company by reading the "About Us" page and employee bios on the company's website.

Seek out the social media profiles of executives and department directors—What are their posts like? Are they proud to represent the brand or work in this industry? Some company leaders may have been interviewed or written books and articles that give you insight into their thinking.



### **Expand your research to news and recent events**

A company's website, blog, and social media are great ways to learn about a company, but you'll also want to get an external perspective. Search for general news coverage and specific industry publications for recent updates about the company and their competitors. Scanning customer forums and product reviews can also help you gauge a company's or their products' reputation.

**Scan the news headlines for red flags.** It's a good idea to scan headlines for major changes in a company's recent past. Note any significant events, such as widespread layoffs, corporate mergers or buyouts, a new CEO, etc. Such changes can bring opportunities, but could also result in low employee morale and leave a volatile work environment in their wake. Proceed with caution.

### **Ask your network for opinions**

Seek opinions from trusted, reliable friends and associates. After you've done your research, discuss what you've learned with your network. Ask people you know for the inside scoop on their own company's culture and if there are opportunities.

### **Find companies that feel like a fit and then research jobs within those companies.**

You can search for positions within the organization either on the company website or 3<sup>rd</sup>-party online job boards.

### ***Job Type / Function Research***

Read job descriptions for positions that seem like a potential fit. A couple of good starting resources are listed below:

- **O\*Net Online** (<http://online.onetcenter.org/>) – Lists key skills, education, and salary for thousands of occupations
- **America's Career Infonet** – ([www.acinet.org](http://www.acinet.org)) – Career videos and similar information to O\*Net

You can also use job board sites like **Monster.com**, **Indeed.com**, **LinkUp.com**, and even specific **company websites** to do this type of research.

With each description, take an honest inventory of how your skills and experience relate to those job descriptions – especially in the 'required' skills (versus 'preferred skills').

Also be honest with yourself about your interest level. It can be exciting to think about new jobs, but are you really interested in doing that day-in and day-out?



## *Professional Associations*

Professional organizations for the industry you're interested in (like SHRM for Human Resources or the ANA for Nurses) can be a great resource. Association websites often contain detailed information about the requirements, trends, and future outlook of that industry or job function.

You can also find people in those organizations and connect with them through social media like LinkedIn (see next section for more details). No one can tell you more than the people working in the field. The reality of working in a specific profession is often not as you imagine it to be or how it's portrayed in movies and the media. It's important to get insider perspectives.

## *LinkedIn*

Find people on LinkedIn who hold the jobs you're interested in or are involved in the relevant associations you've identified. Research the jobs they've held or companies they've worked for. Read up on their experience, education, and certifications.

**Get a sense of what experience people usually have** before they get a foot in the door, or any other indication of how your present skills and job experience/education fare compared to others in the industry. Does everyone you see working in your chosen profession have a graduate degree? Are there a lot of career changers?

Some industries and professions are more open than others. For example, the tech industry tends to be more results-oriented than other fields, partly because of necessity, as technology is evolving so fast that new professions are created before traditional colleges can establish programs to teach the new skills. Additionally, there are usually no legal requirements to join its ranks.

Some professions, on the other hand, are more tightly regulated and require specific degrees and licenses.

When research people through LinkedIn, you can also read their profiles and/or articles they've written or posted to learn more about what they do.

You can even connect with them on LinkedIn to start building a relationship (Later, we will discuss asking people in your network to talk with you about your jobs of interest, so this can be a good way to get the ball rolling on that.)



## *Salary Range Research*

Estimating your earning potential is very important, [Glassdoor](#) is one of the top resources online to research salary ranges, and I highly recommend you spend plenty of time researching their database.

Tip: always research profession *and* location — salaries can vary a lot from city to city!

## *Company Review Sites*

Another reason to spend time on Glassdoor is to browse their anonymous employee reviews, which can tell you a lot about a company and the culture they are building.

Pick a few different companies in your area and see if you can find reviews from people who have the profession you are thinking of entering. See if you notice specific recurring complaints or positive comments.

Look for insights into the way people interact with each other, work-life balance, etc. While a lot depends on specific teams and organizations, you might notice recurring issues across different companies, indicating more systemic issues within the profession or industry.

**Use the *Career Action Plan* document to help inform and guide your research, and use the *Company & Position Research* spreadsheet to track what you find out.**

