

Creating a Target Employer List

Job searching takes a lot of long time. Make sure you are applying to work for employers you actually like.

When I am working with a student, I always initially emphasize that the job search “starts with you” and we go from there. It is important to identify personal qualities such as skills, strengths, interests, and values that you would like to include in your work. But after you have identified these qualities, what comes next? Subsequently, you should find companies and organizations that align with what you want. Devise a road map for your job search by identifying those employers to whom you feel personally connected. However, this list should evolve and not remain static. Here are a few resources you can use to learn about employers to add to your list.

Google

I don’t think it is a stretch to say that a Google search is often the first step in an individual’s quest for information. Perhaps you prefer a company that possesses one or more of the following criteria: an emphasis on professional development, a work life balance, civic engagement, or writing creatively. I would initiate your search for employers with Google. Simply searching “employers who value creative writing” or “employers who value work life balance in Atlanta” could help you discover employers who align with your goals and may not have been originally considered.

Company website

By visiting a company’s website, you can learn more about their mission, vision, and history. By learning more about how and why a company was started, you can see if you identify with the company’s founding principles and values. When scanning a company’s website, ask yourself the following questions: Does this company seem like an organization I would be proud to work for? Does this company seem like an organization that will support me as an individual as well as my professional goals?

Glassdoor

Glassdoor is a website that gives you the inside scoop on companies by collecting user-generated input about culture, salary information, interview questions, and much more. Take what you find on this site with a grain of salt because the information found on this page is opinion-based. Glassdoor can give you an insider’s perspective you might not gather from reading a company’s website.

LinkedIn

Glancing at a company’s LinkedIn page can give you an idea of projects the company is working on, recent achievements, and a sense of culture based on the tone used by the post writers. You should also start following companies you are interested in and key players at each company so that your newsfeed will help you stay up-to-date with each company of interest.

Your network

Once you have identified employers that seem “good on paper,” asking people for a firsthand account of what it is like to work at a specific company will help you gather insider information about the company culture, management, and how employees are treated. Before you speak to

someone about their work experience, draft a list of questions that will help you learn more about whether this organization aligns with your personal needs. Questions may include: *What do you enjoy about working for this company? How does your company prevent employees from experiencing burn out? What are some examples of professional development you received on the job? What do you and your co-workers do for lunch? How long do people usually stay with this company?* These all constitute solid inquiries that will affirm or refute preconceptions about the company.

Good luck with your upcoming job search!