



Make an Employer Target List

An employer target list will give you focus and make you more attractive as a job candidate. It's not too soon to start your list.



Taking the time to identify companies you'd like to work for in industries that align with your career interests will provide several benefits. A target list will guide your networking efforts and help you deepen your industry knowledge. It will also increase the chance of learning of jobs as soon as they're posted and make you a more well-informed and attractive job candidate to the companies you identify.

If you make your list soon enough, it can even help you make coursework and professional activity decisions that will best prepare and qualify you for work at the companies you most admire.

How to create your target list

Making and maintaining an employer target list doesn't have to take a lot of time, and the process can be a great source of inspiration and motivation as you prepare yourself for a rewarding career.

Researching the companies you admire is a great place to start. Who are the leaders in your industry or industries of focus? Visit their websites, including the career sections. Get a sense of their business focus, culture, and values. Who are their competitors? Research them as well. You may identify some new targets.

You can widen your search by accessing resources such as:

- "Best companies" list providers like Fortune and Crain's, which publish a variety of company rankings annually. Crain's is particularly useful for local lists in their cities of coverage.
- Professional association websites, which typically contain member directories and other useful industry information.
- Your local chamber of commerce, often another good source of company information, including member directories.

Tip: It's a good idea to limit your list to 15 or 20 companies—more will be a challenge to manage.

Dig deeper

You've assembled your list. Now it's time to look for detail to deepen your knowledge and confirm that each is likely a good match.

Visit or revisit each organization's website and social media channels. Read the organization's mission statement, and review any information shared about the work environment, company culture, and the kind of people they hire.

LinkedIn's company section is an excellent place to find detailed company-specific and industry information. Search connections, new hires, promotions, job postings, related companies, and more.

Glassdoor.com is another good source—the site's reviews, employer ratings, salaries, CEO approval ratings, and other content will provide insights on the company's desirability as an employer.

Develop contacts

Once you have confidence in your target list, you can begin to develop contacts at each. Identify people and reach out through networking sites like LinkedIn and company Facebook pages.

Alumni are a great source for contacts. Check with DePaul's Career Center for resources and advice—our ASK Network (Alumni Sharing Knowledge) is an excellent way to connect.

Leverage your list

Once you have identified your targets and contacts, it's essential to stay up to date on the company—recent news, including job postings, leadership changes, new product launches, mergers and acquisitions, media mentions—and stay in touch.

DePaul's Career Center has lots of material to help with networking, developing internship opportunities, and more.

Get proactive!

According to PayScale.com, at least 70% of all jobs are never posted. That makes networking critical.

The adage "It's not what you know, it's who you know" is as true now as ever. That's why getting in touch and staying in touch is critical. Get out there and build that network!