RESEARCH RESOURCES
A cardinal rule in targeting organizations during your search for the right position is to do your homework first. Know as much as you can about the organization, its position in the industry and the individuals in the organizations you plan to contact. It is also important that in each company, you identify and contact the individual or individuals who would make the decision to hire you. In some cases the contact may not be the person who would be your supervisor but, instead, his supervisor or possibly someone higher in the organization in a different function.

The following are categories of vital sources of information about particular industries, companies, decision makers and job openings:

PEOPLE
People you know or may network to are excellent sources of information.

THE INTERNET
The Internet is a powerful tool for seeking career opportunities or for accessing information on specific companies and industry trends. You can obtain information through direct access to a company’s web site, through search engines, company financial databases and numerous employment opportunity sites.

ELECTRONIC DATABASES
The InfoTrac database and Business Dateline, both available at many libraries, allow you to access full text articles from 800 business magazines; the EDGAR database allows you to read through company financial information (public companies only). Other proprietary databases, such as CareerSearch, allow you to identify companies by product, by geography or by industry.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LISTINGS
The local Chamber of Commerce provides lists of companies in specific locations.

CLASSIFIEDS
Who is hiring? An ad may not match your background, but the company itself may be a potential target. Multiple ads by a company may indicate growth activity.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL AND DISCLOSURE REPORTS
Publicly held companies whose stock is traded on a major stock exchange are required by law to publish and make available, at no cost, their annual financial and disclosure reports. These are an excellent source of information about principals, business philosophy, current properties, long-term contracts, business volume, and growth.

NEWSPAPERS
Business sections in local newspapers are excellent sources of information. Also look for articles on new ventures, new products, reorganizations, promotions, and growth.

TRADE & PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS
Make it a point to read your industry’s trade journals to identify key sources for jobs, contacts, and changes in your field. Any change described could be a possible lead for you. If someone is promoted or a new product is introduced, this information could prompt you to call with congratulations or to see a new need for your expertise and provide a reason to network, contact, and meet.

INFORMATION TO HAVE ON THE EMPLOYER
Relative size of the firm in the industry
Potential growth for the industry
Percent of annual sales growth in the last five years
Array of product line or service
Potential new markets, products, or service line
Various price points in product or service line
Who is the competition
Age of top management
Organization structure
Geographical locations
Number of plants, stores, or sales outlets
Short-term profit picture
Structured or unstructured training
Average time in non-management assignment
Recent items in the news
Structure of assets
Relocation policies
Percent of annual growth in earnings per share
People you know in the firm
Formal versus on-the-job training
Typical career path in your field
Location of home office
Name of recruiter