Research!

You know how. You have spent time gathering information to complete a paper for a class or to find an apartment. Now you are looking for an employer where you may spend the next two to five years. Take the time and do your homework.

There are many variables in selecting an employer. You want to know as much as possible about a prospective employer before you submit a resume. As you learn more about an organization, you can begin to sense if you will ‘fit’ with the culture of the organization. Research will increase your confidence in the overall job search process, as well as improve your chances of being selected for the job you want.

There are a variety of sources of information on organizations. Start with a visit to the Career Center. You will find materials which discuss career fields in general as well as those which detail specific job functions. Use the center web site http://careers.usc.edu/ to begin your research on the internet. At http://careers.usc.edu/students/career-information/ you will find many links to resources from professional organizations to government agency sites. When visiting the Career Center you can also use Hoovers Online to obtain detailed corporate information.

When researching an organization or career field you should have questions in mind to organize your data collection.

- **What types of organizations are interested in hiring someone with your skills, educational experience, interests and work preferences?**

- **What are the success factors in this field? (e.g. academic training, personality characteristics, skills, opportunities for advancement and professional development). What type of individual succeeds in this environment?**

- **What are entry-level job titles?**

- **What type of activities are employees involved in on a typical day?**

- **Where is the center of industry/career field activity? Do these employers have major local or regional offices? Is this a national or global organization? Which office do you have to approach to get the job you want?**

- **What are the major products and services of this organization?**

- **Who are the major clients of this organization?**
• Who are the major industry competitors? Are the opportunities growing or shrinking in this career field?

• What is the culture of this organization? Is the organization culturally diverse?

• Who is the individual you have to see to get the job? What is the title of the person who will hire you?

• How should you contact these firms? (networking, telephone, web site, e-mail)

• What qualities do you have that make you a potential candidate for a position with this organization?

• What is the general salary range for entry level positions in this field?

• What are the typical working hours?

As you compile answers to these and other questions you may add, you will start to refine your options based on your interests and values.

Finding an internship or part-time job in the career field you are considering will give you concrete experience and allow you to test your skills and interests with an organization.

Begin with the big picture and then narrow your choices. Consider all your options, review job listings on connectSC and utilize the connectSC Career Network contacts to gain additional information.

Use the following resources available through the Career Center:

connectSC for part-time, full-time and internship listings
connectSC Career Network
Hoovers Online
Vault.com
General Career Reference Materials
Internship Information
NACE Salary Survey
Directory of National Trade & Professional Associations
Journals, Periodicals, Newspapers and Magazines

Also online, visit these sites:
http://www.wetfeet.com