Researching a Company

Before interviewing, it is best to know everything you can about the company for which you may soon be working. Here are ten areas you should research before going on an interview or accepting employment:

- **The Industry.** What does an employee in this field actually do? How has the industry changed over the past five or ten years, and where is it headed in the future? Which companies are industry leaders and which firms are challenging their dominance?

- **The Company.** When and why was the company founded? How has it changed over the years? Who are its major competitors? What are its most notable recent successes and set backs?

- **Company Products (or Services).** What does the organization make or provide? How are these products or services regarded? Who are the users? Where are the markets?

- **Company Diversity.** How many divisions and subsidiaries does the company have? What does each one do? Where are the job sites? In which of these places would you enjoy living?

- **Corporate Finances.** How profitable is the company? Is it making more or less money than it used to? How do these numbers compare with those of its key competitors?

- **Management.** Who owns and runs the organization? What are their backgrounds and business philosophies? Are executives promoted from within or imported from outside?

- **Future Direction.** What new projects are in development? What government contracts have recently been awarded? How is the company growing or consolidating?

- **Corporate Culture.** Does the organization foster teamwork or competition among peers? How closely are entry-level employees supervised? What is the dress code?

- **Work Environment.** Do entry-level engineers have individual work stations or share common space? Are supervisors remote or accessible? Is equipment state-of-the-art or aging?

- **Socialization.** How are new hires integrated into the organization? Are mentors available? What kind of social, recreational or athletic activities does the company sponsor?