



Informational Interviews

Informational interviews are an excellent way to research potential career fields, network with individuals in your field, gain insight into the day-to-day functions of a job and learn more about the skills one needs to succeed in a particular career path. Informational interviews are also helpful in identifying your skills and interests and becoming more comfortable in an interview setting.

Locating People to Interview

- Family members and friends
- Professional organizations or associations
- College connections (Alumni Association, Career Center, faculty, classmates, parents of your friends or roommate)
- LinkedIn and other professional social media groups
- Yellow pages or on-line directories
- Local companies, organizations and your regional Chamber of Commerce
- Career fairs and events
- Cold calls

Preparing For the Interview

- Update your LinkedIn profile
- Bring a copy of your resume to the interview or mail it in advance as a FYI
- Dress professionally, just as you would if you were interviewing for a job with this organization
- Research the organization or the field (libraries, on-line resources, LinkedIn company pages, directories, annual reports, company web site, etc.)
- Develop a list of potential questions (see sample questions below)

During the Interview

- Be punctual. Arrive on time
- Call if you are going to be late or need to cancel or reschedule
- Turn off your cell phone
- Be enthusiastic and professional at all times
- Offer a firm hand shake, make good eye contact, etc
- Don't turn an informational interview into a job interview
- Ask your prepared questions, but also be flexible and let the person being interviewed take the lead if appropriate
- Take notes
- Ask for advice or suggestions about entering or working in the field
- If appropriate ask for the names of other contacts in the field
- If you wish, ask for feedback or suggestions on your resume

Following the Interview

- Send a thank you note or email
- Consider staying in contact

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Describe a typical day in your job. Describe a typical month.
2. What are your main responsibilities or functions?
3. What's your job title? Are there other titles used for what you do?
4. Are there busier or slower times of the month, year, or season?
5. What type of work hours are typical in the field? Is overtime common? Is there flexible scheduling?
6. How much travel is required for this job??
7. Do you usually work at your desk? On the sales floor? Outside?
8. What kinds of deadlines to you typically deal with? What kinds of stresses are common?
9. How has this job or career affected your social and/or family life?
10. What kinds of people do you interact with?
11. Do you supervise others? If so who?
12. What types of decisions do you make?
13. What types of challenges or problems occur in your job?
14. What parts of the job do you find most rewarding?
15. What parts of the job do you find least rewarding?
16. How did you enter the field?
17. What type of skills do you look for in job candidates?
18. What are typical salaries in the career?
19. What types of education, training or certifications are required for this type of position?
20. What opportunities are there for advancement?
21. What other careers have you held, and how did they prepare you for this position/career?
22. What do you like most about working for this organization?
23. How does the organization utilize technology and social media?
24. What are the current trends in this field?
25. If your job were suddenly eliminated, what types of other positions do you feel prepared to do?
26. How is the current economy impacting this industry?
27. What type of advice would you offer to someone entering this field?
28. What types of college courses or activities would help prepare one for this job or field?
29. What's the employment outlook in this field?
30. If you could do things over, would you choose the same career track or would you do something differently?
31. How does one learn about job opportunities for this field or organization?
32. Can you suggest other people I could talk to?