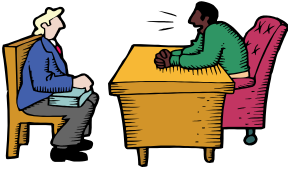


# ***Opportunity Knocks...***



## ***Are you listening?***

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Informational interviewing can be the answer. This is one of the most effective forms of networking and gaining information about your career interests.

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### ***Why should I conduct an Informational Interview?***

- Explore careers and clarify your career goal(s)
- Expand your professional network
- Build confidence for future job interviews or internships
- Access the most up-to-date career information
- Identify your professional strengths and weaknesses
- Explore your dream job
- Research employers
- Gain information that other candidates may not have

#### **Did You Know?**

“One out of every 200 resumes results in a job offer, however, one out of every 12 informational interviews results in a job offer.”

The purpose of informational interviewing is not to get a job; but to garner specific career information. This valuable practice can result in an offer, sometimes an added benefit of doing an informational interview.

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# How to Conduct the Interview



## Before the Interview

- Choose a company or person in your field of study that interests you.
- Learn as much as you can about the organization.
- Write down the questions that you wish to ask.
- If possible, learn something about the person with whom you will be interviewing.
- Telephone for an appointment; ask for a specific amount of time, i.e. 20 minutes.
- Dress professionally.
- Arrive 10-15 minutes before your appointment.
- Bring copies of your resume, but do not offer it unless they ask for it.

## During the Interview

- Restate your purpose and why you made an appointment with this particular person.
- Be prepared to initiate the conversation, since you are the interviewer.
- Limit the interview to 20-30 minutes.
- Ask for referrals to other appropriate individuals in the field or in related organizations.
- Keep in mind that this is an information-gathering and advice-seeking interview, not an employment interview.
- Let the individual you are interviewing bring up the discussion of specific job vacancies.



## After the Interview

- Send a thank-you note and keep the individual you have interviewed posted on your progress.
- Evaluate the information you received. How does it relate to your plans?
- Evaluate your style of interviewing. What could you have done better? Use what you have learned when you conduct your next interview.
- Keep the door open for future contacts with this person.

# Other Things to Consider

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## In Person, by Phone, or E-mail?



### In Person

Face-to-face interviews are the most valuable and effective. Talking to someone in their own work environment is more instructive than talking over the phone or on-line. You can observe the corporate culture and atmosphere of the office. Also face-to-face interviews will facilitate a lasting relationship with your interviewee and it will be more likely for them to remember you.

### Phone or E-mail

Sometimes there are geographical or time constraints that may prevent you from conducting a face-to-face interview. In these cases, a phone or e-mail interview can be very helpful. Also interviews by e-mail are less intrusive and lets the interviewee respond at their convenience.

#### How to prepare for a phone informational interview

- Write a script for the interview. Organize your thoughts, and avoid reading it word for word when it comes to the real interview.
- Practice your script and interview on a friend or roommate.
- When the time comes for the real interview make sure that you are free from distractions like noise.
- Make sure you have all your needed supplies within reach, such as your resume, script, possible questions, and company research.

#### Things to consider for writing an e-mail

- Evaluate your audience. Narrow your message and subject line to suit the situation.
- Consider your message and summarize it in a few sentences.
- State what kind of action will take place.
- Make sure to answer the basic questions of who, what, when, and how.
- Organize your information and make several drafts.



# 20 Questions to ask during an Informational Interview



1. What is a typical day like? How do you spend your time at work?
2. What do you like best about your work and/or field? Worst?
3. How did this type of work interest you and how did you get started?
4. What part of the job do you personally find most satisfying? Most challenging?
5. What are some characteristics of successful people in your organization (or career field)?
6. What are some important factors that have contributed to your work?
7. What are the jobs you had that led you to this one?
8. What skills are most important to be competent in this field? What degrees and/or training are necessary?
9. What courses or field experiences would be beneficial to better prepare for this career?
10. Can you suggest some ways a student could obtain this necessary experience?
11. Is there a current demand in this field? What about in the next couple of years?
12. How stable is the job market in this field?
13. How do you keep up on your field?
14. What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?
15. If your job was suddenly eliminated, what kinds of work do you feel prepared to do?
16. How has your job affected your lifestyle?
17. What professional organizations do you belong to or would you recommend?
18. Are there other individuals that I should interview to more fully understand the field? May I use your name?
19. How would you describe the working atmosphere and the people with whom you work?
20. Do you have any special words of encouragement or warning as a result of your experience?