



# Informational Interviewing

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One of the best ways to gather information about a particular occupation or an industry is to talk to people working in the field. This process is known as **Informational Interviewing**. An informational interview is a chance for **you** to ask the questions. The goal is to *obtain information*, not to land a job.

Informational Interviews allow you to:

- *Explore* careers.
- *Clarify* your goals.
- *Discover* job opportunities that may not be advertised.
- *Expand* your professional contacts.
- *Network* within your area of interest.
- *Develop* confidence for future job interviews.
- *Obtain* up-to-date career information.
- *Recognize* your strengths and weaknesses.

**Decide what occupation or industry you want to learn more about.**

- Assess your interest, values, skills and goals. Compare this information with labor conditions and trends to identify the best areas to research.

**Prepare for the interview.**

- Read as much as you can about the occupation or your area of interest. Think about what information you want to gather and consider questions and concerns that you may have about the occupation/industry. Prepare a list of questions for the interview.

**Figure out who you are going to interview and schedule a time to talk.**

- Be creative! Begin with people you know (friends, neighbors, supervisors, colleagues, classmates, etc.). Professional organizations, the phone book, organizational directories and public speakers are also valuable resources. You can even call an organization and ask for the name of a person by job title.
- Set up the interview via the phone, a letter (followed by a phone call) or have someone who knows the person make the appointment for you.

**Conduct the interview.**

- Take the interview seriously—be professional and polite, arrive on time, dress appropriately. Come prepared with your list of questions, while planning for both an unstructured or structured discussion.



# Informational Interviewing (Cont.)

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- Before you leave, ask your contact for names or organizations that may be helpful to you. Ask for permission to use your contact's name when speaking to these new contacts.

## **After the interview.**

- Write down the information you gathered. Analyze the information and make the necessary changes to your job search, resume and goals, if necessary.
  - Be sure to send a thank you note to the person you interviewed.
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## **Sample Questions For Your Interview**

1. On a typical work day, what do you do?
2. How did you get to where you are today? Briefly describe your career path.
3. What are the best aspects of your job?
4. What are the biggest challenges of your job?
5. Are there any professional associations/journals/websites that you recommend I check out to learn more about the field?
6. What specific training or education is required for this type of job?
7. Do you have any advice for someone entering this field?
8. What personal characteristics or abilities are important to being successful in this type of job?
9. Is there a demand for people in this field?
10. How do you see the field changing in the future?
11. What entry level positions would allow me to learn as much as possible?
12. Is there any room for advancement in the field?
13. Do you think my experience will allow me to enter the field?
14. What are the problems that you see with working in this field?
15. What are the salary ranges of various levels in the field?
16. If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same field? What would you do differently? Why?
17. How does my resume look to you? Do any areas need improvement?
18. What types of training do companies usually offer people entering this field?
19. With the knowledge you have regarding my education, skills and experience, are there any other fields or jobs that you recommend I research further?
20. Do you have any other contacts that you recommend I speak with? When I call him/her, may I use your name?

