

THE GUIDE TO INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS



WHAT IS AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?

An Informational interview is a critical event in building a network. However, many people struggle with several aspects of this activity. We knew it would be beneficial if we could simplify this for you.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?

To make a new relationship, gather information, and discover opportunities.

- *This interview is not to ask for a job! Understanding this will make this meeting easier to get through; No pressure, you are there to learn and start a relationship!*

WHO SHOULD YOU MEET WITH?

- People who work in the field you are interested in
- People who work for the companies you are interested in
- People who you're introduced to
- People who reach out to you
- Individuals who may care enough to look through their network to make introductions for you

Remember it's not just about you. If there are people you can assist, meet with them; you never know who they might connect you to.

HOW TO REQUEST OR SCHEDULE THE MEETINGS:

It is usually best if someone who knows the individual you want to meet with will make an introduction for you.

- You should write your own introduction making it easy for this person to introduce you to the person you would like to meet. Make sure the link to your LinkedIn page is included in the introduction.

Note: Don't ask to be connected on LinkedIn until after you meet with this person.

- Tell the individual that you are looking to gather more information about the field of <XYZ> or about their company and ask if they wouldn't mind meeting for 30 minutes to share the information they have on these areas.
- When the meeting is set make sure you have their mobile number and they have yours, just in case.

HOW TO PREPARE:

1. Research this individual and his/her company.
2. Be prepared with your most valuable questions.
3. Bring something of value. What do you have that might be valuable?
 - Information, latest trends, how your age group feels about certain trends in the industry. If this person has children your age, how can you help them?
4. You should have a business card, even if you are still a student.

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW:

Arrive early: If you are meeting at a neutral site like a coffee shop get your beverage and text the person you are meeting letting them know where you are seated and what you are wearing.

Finishing up: Thank them for their time and be respectful of the time they have blocked. Remind them that you are still learning and that you would appreciate any introductions to people who they think may be willing to meet with you.

SOME THINGS TO ASK:

- Thank them for meeting and confirm how much time they have available to meet.
- Can you tell me what you studied in school and how you ended up in this career
- What do you like best about your job?
- Are there things you do not like?
- What do you feel is going on in the industry with respect to <XYZ> careers>?
- What do you like best about working for <XYZ> company>?
- Can you tell me what industry newsletters or blogs you follow to stay informed?
- Would you mind forwarding newsletters to me next time they arrive in your inbox?
- Is there anything I can help you with?
- Would you like to know the kinds of things they are teaching us in school about this field <your field of study>?
- I know the job market is kind of tight right now, from a recruiting perspective are there certain types of specialties or careers your company is looking for that I may be able to recommend someone to you?
- Can you tell me how you network professionally?
- Who do you meet with to continue building your network?
 - **This is your opportunity to ask if you can send a Linked In request.**
- Ask them if there is anything you can help them with or if there is someone they know that you could help out.

FOLLOWING UP:

- Send a follow up email or thank you card.
- Ask if you can stay in touch, ask the person to keep you in mind if they think there are others in their company or their network that may enjoy meeting you.
- Keep a list of those you meet with for these informational interviews and make sure you let them know when you get your next job.
- Thank them for the role they played in helping you clarify some career choices.
- Offer introductions to people they may want to meet in your new company.
- You should reach out to stay in touch at least once every 6 months.