

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING IS **NOT** A JOB HUNTING METHOD

NEVER, EVER USE THIS AS A FORUM TO ASK FOR A JOB OR JOB LEADS

Informational interviews are most widely used as a career exploration method for individuals who are searching for a career direction.

Informational interviews are a valuable tool for seeking information about your profession or industry.

Informational interviews can be a component of a comprehensive job search strategy.

Information interviews allows you to connect with others, gain value information and empowers you to:

Make Good Decisions
Overcome Potential Barriers
Market Yourself Effectively
Develop Your Networking Circle
Builds Your Confidence

MAKE CONNECTIONS THROUGH NETWORKING

NETWORK WITH FAMILY, RELATIVES, FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, CHURCH MEMBERS, ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, PEERS, COLLEAGUES, NONPROFIT VOLUNTEERS, CIVIC MEMBERS, JOBCLUBBERS, INSTRUCTORS, ACQUAINTANCES, PHYSICIAN, DENTIST, FINANCIAL ADVISER & so on and so on . . .

METHODS OF CONNECTION

WRITTEN LETTER:

- Develop a well-written *introductory* or *approach* letter. Start the letter by stating the individual who referred you to them. State you are seeking information or advice not asking for a job.
- Do not include your resume. However, including a 'BIO' is okay. However, many people challenge this concept. They believe that sending your resume is a time saver and that the person doesn't have request your resume.
- At the end of the letter, state that you will call them the morning of ___ day, the __ date. Make the follow-up call. If you get voicemail, following steps under section 'Phone'.

EMAIL:

- Tell the individual who referred you to them. State you are seeking information or advice not asking for a job.
- Do not attach your resume. However, including a 'BIO' is okay. However, many people challenge this concept. They believe that emailing your resume is a time saver and that the person doesn't have to send an email requesting your resume
- At the end of the email, state that you will call them the morning of ___ day, the __ date. Make the follow-up call. If you get voicemail, following steps under section 'Phone'.

PHONE:

- Tell the individual who referred you to them. State you are seeking information or advice not asking for a job.
- 'Hello, my name is Jan Seeker. A mutual friend of ours, John Helper, suggested I contact you. John said you are an accomplished professional who has been with company So & So for several years. I am interested in learning more about what you do and about company So & So.'
- **Do not ask the person to call you back** on the first or even second message you leave. Tell them that you **understand that they are busy professionals** and that you will try to connect with them throughout the week. Do not put the burden of calling you back on them. Asking a person to call you back is a passive way of job hunting. You are the one seeking a job, it is your responsibility to be the active driver in making the connection.
- On Friday, leave a second message stating you have tried to reach them and are sorry you missed them. Wish them a wonderful weekend and state that you will try to connect with them the first part of next week.
- Call them on Tuesday. If they are still unavailable, state something like 'I am really looking forward to the opportunity to talk with you. I will continue to try and connect with you, however in the meantime, if you do get a free minute, my number is 913.469.8500. Again, that is 913.469.8500. Thank you.' Always state your phone number twice.

CONNECTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Try contacting people at work before 8:00 am and after 5:00 pm.
- Though you are anxious to get things moving because you need a job, recognize that you are not this person's priority.
- Do not make assumptions regarding when someone 'should' call you back. They function by their own timetable, not yours.

CONNECTION VIA COLD CALLING . . . Cold calling is not an effective method and is not recommended. It may create undue frustration on your part as well. Though some have been successful using this method, it is by no means the majority.

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LOCATION

- Arrange an appointment at the person's place of business. This allows you to create a professional relationship, as well as give you an opportunity to observe the work climate and possibly give you opportunities to meet others in the field.
- Arrange an appointment to meet at a restaurant or coffee shop – Always Your Treat. This may induce a busy person to give you more time and to be more candid.
- Arrange an appointment to talk with the person on the phone. Sometimes, people will take the opportunity to share information at the time of your initial call. However, the goal is to meet in person.

REQUIREMENTS

- Get the correct spelling and pronunciation of the person's name.
- Set and keep appointments.
- Keep appointments brief – ask for 20 to 30 minutes of their time.
- Keep to the schedule – do not linger past the allotted time (more chances than not, they will offer to extend the time).
- Dress professionally.
- Do your HOMEWORK on the occupation, industry, company, etc.
- Plan your questions in advance!
- Be an active listener – TAKE NOTES!
- If they ask for your resume, ask them if it would be okay if you emailed it to them as a Microsoft attachment.
- Give the person your business card and ask them for their business card.
- Ask if they suggest you talk to anyone else – and ask if you could use their name as a contact introduction.
- **Always, Always** send a 'Thank You' note.
- **Always** send a note later informing them of the follow-up you performed based on their suggestions.
- Once you are employed, send another 'Thank You' note. Let them know where you landed and offer to help them in the future.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What is the basic philosophy of the company?
- Where do you think the company will be in the next 5 years?
- Are you aware of any similar companies that are in a growth mode?
- Does the company face any current challenges?
- What industry or professional associations would you recommend that I participate in?
- These are my strongest assets (skills, expertise, personality traits and values). Where would they be helpful in this organization?
- As a local expert in your profession, what are the current issues facing it?
- Why did you decide to work for this company?
- What are the common misconceptions about working in this company?
- What do you like most about this company?
- Do you find your job exciting? Why?
- How does your company differ from its competitors?
- Are you optimistic about the company's future? Your future with the company?
- What does the company do to contribute to your professional development?
- What were the keys to your career advancement? How did you get where you are?
- How would you describe the working condition here?
- What are the people like that you work with here?
- What is the best way to be viewed by this company as an attractive candidate?
- What advice can you give me about exploring organizations within this industry?
- What do you see as possible next steps for you? What are your short- and long-term career goals?
- Are you concerned about this industry? Why?
- If you were in the job market tomorrow, what steps would you take to be re-employed?
- What helped you the last time you searched for a job within this profession/industry?
- When you are assessing talent, what do you view as the deal makers, as well as the deal breakers?
- Did you target this company? What helped you be successful in landing a position with this company?
- What are the important "key words" or "buzz words" to include in a resume when job hunting in the field?
- Do you know of any job banks that are specific to your profession/industry?
- Do you recommend any recruiters?
- Are there one or two people within the company you suggest I talk with? May I use your name as an introduction?
- Is there someone within our profession that you suggest I talk with? May I contact them and use your name as an introduction?
- Are there other companies you suggest I explore? Do you have a contact there? May I use your name as an introduction?
- Are there other companies you suggest I explore? Do you have a contact there? May I use your name as an introduction?
- Are there any professional organizations with active local chapters that you suggest I explore?