

Informational Interview

What is an Informational Interview and How it Can Help Your Career

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Skillfully used, an [informational interview](#) is one of the most valuable sources of occupational information. While it may cover some of the same ground as printed material or information on a company website, it presents opportunities for an intimate and flexible inside view of a job field unmatched by other sources. The informational interview communicates the first hand experiences and impressions of someone in the occupation, and is directed by your questions.

Stressless Interviewing

An informational interview is less stressful for both you and the employer than a typical job interview. You are the one in control. Questions can be asked that may not be strategic during a first interview (i.e., questions regarding salary, benefits, vacation). You can discuss what is done on a day-to-day basis and relate it to your own interests and feelings. Beyond the advantages of gaining valuable career information, the informational interview provides the opportunity to build self-confidence and to improve your ability to handle a job interview.



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How to Conduct an Informational Interview

You should regard each interview as a business appointment and conduct yourself in a professional manner. If you have made clear, in advance, the explicit purpose of your interview you will, in all probability, find your contact an interested and helpful person. Remember the appointment time and appear promptly for your interview. You should neither be too casually dressed nor overdressed. Regular business attire is appropriate. Be sure you know the name of the person you are meeting, the correct pronunciation of his/her name, and the title of his/her position.

Informational Interview Questions to Ask

Because there are so many [questions you can ask](#) in the informational interview, individuals sometimes take notes during the meeting. A limited amount of note-taking is justified provided that your contact is agreeable and that you don't interrupt communication between the two of you.

Sketch out a brief outline of the topics covered and the information gained as soon as possible after the interview. This will require only a few minutes, and will insure that you remember the important points discussed. [Later](#), working from your outline, you can construct a more detailed report of the interview.

Follow Up With a Thank You Note

Write a [thank you note](#) to the people you have interviewed. Report back to them if you have followed up on any suggestions. By building strong rapport with career contacts you enhance the likelihood that they will offer assistance with your job search when you are ready for the next step in the job search process.

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