

Informational Interviewing

Informational Interviewing is much like investigative reporting - you have to ask the right questions to get the right answers. The *objective of the meeting is to learn* as much as you can about a job or career field to help you decide if it is a good fit. Below are some sample questions. **Quick dos and don'ts:** **Do** thank the person for the time spent with you. **Do** follow-up with a thank you note. **Don't** discuss the issues of your own personal job hunt unless asked specifically.

General Questions about Your Interviewee's Career Field:

- What do you find unique about your career field?
- What skills or personal characteristics do you feel contribute most to success in this industry?
- What are the growth areas of this field?
- What types of training do companies offer those who enter this field?
- How is the economy affecting this industry?
- In what ways is your occupation changing?

All about your Interviewee's Job:

- What is a typical day like?
- What kinds of problems do you deal with?
- Do you have to deal with a significant amount of conflict in this job?
- How does your time use vary? Are there busy slow times or is the work activity fairly constant?
- How much flexibility do you have in determining how you perform your job?

About Preparing For This Career:

- How did you prepare for this work?
- If you were entering this career today, would you change your preparation in any way to facilitate entry?
- Does your work relate to any experiences or studies you had in college?

About the Culture of Your Interviewee's Company or Organization:

- What do you like most about this company?
- How does your company differ from its competitors?
- Why do your clients choose this company?
- Has the company made any recent changes to improve its business practices and profitability?
- How does the company evaluate job performance?
- What does the company do to contribute to its employees' professional development?

About the Company's/Organization's Needs:

- In what areas do you see the company expanding?
- What obstacles do you see getting in the way of the company's growth?
- If you needed someone to assist you in your job, what tasks would you assign to your assistant?

Seeking General Advice and Networking Referrals from Your Interviewee:

- Can you suggest some ways a person could obtain the experience necessary to enter this field?
- What is the best way to obtain a position that will get me started in this occupation?
- What are the skills that are most important for a position in this field?
- What kinds of experience, paid or unpaid, would you encourage for anybody pursuing a career in this field?
- How would you assess the experience I've had so far in terms of entering this field?