

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

How to Prepare for the Network Opportunities

The informational interview is one of the most effective methods for gaining more detailed information about a particular career.

It is an opportunity for you to ask the questions and gain a better understanding about a career, industry and/or company.

An interview can take place over the phone or in person. Ideally, the best place to meet is at the contact's place of employment.

Know Yourself

Determine what you need before the initial interview. Figure out what information would be most beneficial as you explore your career options.

Know the Mentor

If an alum, make sure that you are familiar with the mentor's academic program and department at IUPUI. Be sure to have a clear understanding of his/her current position. Utilize LinkedIn to learn about his/her career path and experience.

Know the Organization

Research details about the organization in which the person works. You can find out specific information using company websites, annual reports, directories, newspapers and other professionals in the field.

What to do After the Interview

Before you end the interview, think about your original objective. Has it been met? In your closing, you should pull everything together. Close on a happy note. Thank the person for his/her time and knowledge. Let the person know that the information they have shared is valuable and the ways in which it will influence future decisions. Ask for permission to contact him/her again if you find a need for further information. If you have met in person, ask for a business card.

Be Professional

Present yourself in a businesslike manner. Allow the person being interviewed to do most of the talking. Do not dominate the conversation. Be positive and assertive – not overly flattering or obnoxiously aggressive. Be courteous and keep a time limit of 20- 30 minutes unless the contact agrees to more time

This is a chance for you to ask questions and obtain information. It is not used to get a job.

Reasons for Having an Informational Interview

1. To explore careers and clarify your career goals
2. To discover employment opportunities that are not advertised
3. To expand your professional network
4. To build confidence for job interviews
5. To access the most up-to-date career information
6. To identify your professional strengths and weaknesses

Send a thank you note within 24 hours of the informational interview. Thank the person again for his/her time and generosity. You may want to maintain the relationship through periodic contacts. The best way to do this is let the person know of your progress on a regular basis and add them as a contact on LinkedIn. Encourage the mentor to keep in touch with you and promise to keep him/her informed of your plans. Always acknowledge how appreciative you are of their help.



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Questions to Ask

About the Individual

- How did you become interested in this field?
- What was your career path from college to present?
- What do you like best about your job/career?
- What do you like least about your job/career?
- If you had to do it over again, would you choose the same career?
- What would you change?

About the Job/Organization

- What are some of the short and long term goals of the organization?
- What is the philosophy of the organization?
- What types of training programs are available?
- Can you describe the typical entry-level position in the organization?
- Can you explain a typical career path from entry level to top management in this organization?
- What are the major responsibilities of your position? Specific duties?
- What types of personal qualities are necessary for this occupation?
- What is the level of pressure on the job?
- What is the optimal level of performance to achieve career success?



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About the Career Field

- What types of positions are most often found in this field?
- What are some general skills that are needed to perform well in this field?
- Do you recommend any specific training or education?
- What are some of the disadvantages of this field?
- What is a typical entry level position in this field?
- What is the current outlook for entry level positions?

About You

- Would you be willing to give me some feedback on my resume?
- What do you think of my background so far in terms of entering this field?
- What would you suggest to improve my qualifications?
- Is there anyone else in the field you could recommend I meet with?

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