

Informational Interviewing

Informational interviewing is a networking activity that is important to the career development and career exploration process. Informational interviews are a type of interview held with a person who is doing the type of work/career in which you are interested. Primarily it should be with someone who is also happy with their line of work/profession as a disgruntled or unhappy employee can negatively skew the overall perspective and prove to be non-beneficial.

The primary goal of informational interviewing is to gather information and advice. Informational interviews allow you to explore and learn about specific occupations, gather professional advice regarding getting started in a certain field/industry, and networking with people who can help you become successful in your job search and beyond.

Informational interviews are not limited to face-to-face interaction (although I highly recommend it), but can also be held via telephone or online communications like webcams, Skype, etc.

Sample Questions:

1. How did you decide on this type of work?
2. What did you decide to major/specialize in during your undergraduate studies?
3. Is an advanced degree required for your type of work?
4. What do you like best about your position?
5. What do you like the least?
6. What is a typical day or week like for someone in your type of work?
7. What kind of skills, education, and/or specialized training would I need to get into a similar position?
8. What personal qualities are necessary to be successful in this type of work?
9. What is the typical entry-level salary range that can be expected for this type of position?
(NEVER ask someone how much money they actually earn)
10. What do you wish someone would have told you about this type of work before you chose it as a career?
11. Is there anyone else that you recommend I speak with from your company?

Follow-up your interview with a thank you note.