

INFORMATION INTERVIEWS

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What is an Information Interview?

Information interviewing is not interviewing for a job, but rather a way for you to gain valuable insights into your career area of interest from professionals in the field. The insights you gain will help you to make informed decisions, whether you are choosing or refining your career path. Information interviews are also one of the most effective networking tools as they help you develop your professional contacts.

Internet Resources

<http://alis.alberta.ca/worksearch/re/info-interviews.html>

http://www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html

http://www.careerkey.org/asp/career_development/information_interviewing.html

http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/categories.jsp?lang=en&category_id=420

<http://www.canadiancareers.com/infointerview.html>

"The beginning of knowledge is the discovery of something we do not understand"

- Frank Herbert-

TOP 10 TIPS ON INFORMATION INTERVIEWS



1. Finding Contacts

People are usually very willing to talk to you. The easiest way to begin is start with someone you know or a friend of a friend. Use the internet, library, or newspapers to research companies. You could also speak to career advisors and professional organizations/associations.

2. Arranging the Interview

Once you decide who to contact, call or email them requesting a brief interview. Include the following information in your initial contact:

- First and last name
- How you got their name and contact
- A brief summary about yourself (2-3 sentences)
- Inform them you are contacting them to request an information interview

3. Maximize Your Time

When requesting an information interview, let the person know you would like 20 - 30 minutes of their time. Make sure you are on time, and don't stay longer than your allotted time.

4. Remember, it's not a Job Interview

Be clear and honest about the meeting, and stick to the purpose which is to obtain career information and not to ask for a job. The fact that you are seeking only information will help set you apart from all the others who are asking for jobs.

5. Preparation

Being prepared for the information interview is critical. Learn as much as you can ahead of time about the career field, the person you are interviewing, and the organization. Think through what you want to say about yourself. Be ready to answer questions about your areas of interests, previous experiences, and future plans. Have your resume up-to-date and ready in case a copy is requested.

6. Questions to Ask

Make sure to prepare a list of questions ahead of time. Ask open ended questions that require more than a one word response. Develop questions that will get you

information about trends in the industry, challenges the organization faces, employment outlook in the career field, occupations related to the career you're interested in, etc.

7. Dress

It's important to dress professionally for the information interview. Avoid jeans, t-shirts, shorts, etc. The clothes you choose for an information interview is no different than the clothes you would wear for an actual job interview. Remember not to wear any cologne or perfume.

8. Conducting the Interview

Restate the reason for your meeting with the person. Take brief notes during the interview. Give the person you are interviewing your full attention. You may have other questions that come up during the interview, so don't be tied to the questions you developed. Review your questions near the end to ensure the most important ones were addressed. Be respectful of the interviewer's time. Avoid overly personal questions. Do more listening than talking.

9. Follow-Up

Always follow-up the interview with a thank you letter or email within one or two business days. This will demonstrate your level of professionalism and courtesy. In the letter, you want to thank the interviewer for their time, information, and any referrals. You may also want to mention how the information assisted you. You can also compliment the interviewer on their knowledge and expertise.

10. Evaluate What You Learned

After, review what went well during the interview. Also review what did not go well and what you could do to improve on the next one. Ask yourself what valuable information did you gain from the interview to help you make informed decisions.