

THE INGENIOUS INFORMATION INTERVIEW

Talking with someone already in a particular career field can give you a better sense of the challenges and opportunities, specific and hidden demands, and the drawbacks that working in the field may involve. People already in established careers realize that they have a professional responsibility to meet with aspiring newcomers and answer their questions. Confine your questions to gaining information about industry and career opportunities.

ARRANGING THE INTERVIEW

1. Call the company and ask the name of the person for the position you are researching i.e. Purchasing Agent, Marketing Manager, Safety Coordinator, IT Manager, etc.
2. Obtain the correct spelling of the name, job title, phone number, extension and email address of the contact
3. Prepare a script in point form of what you will say to the person
4. When you call, explain who you are and the program you are in
5. Explain why you are calling and that you will require only 15 - 20 minutes for the interview
6. Schedule the appointment and obtain specific details of where to meet and when
7. Confirm your appointment the day before
8. Research the company
9. Prepare your list of questions and email them ahead of time
10. Dress appropriately (conservatively and professionally)
11. In a folder have your list of questions, resume, curriculum, pad of paper, pen
12. If you are going to tape the interview, ask permission and ensure your equipment is working.

General Rules

- Assume most people will be willing to talk with you if you are genuinely enthusiastic and interested in THEM.
- Be sure they understand you are NOT LOOKING FOR A JOB
- Ask for advice on your resume, career plan, and skill requirements
- Prepare adequately
- Research the company
- If you requested 20 minutes, do not overstay your welcome
- Ask for a business card
- After the interview, record contact information, details of dialogue, and company profile
- Write a thank you note
- Maintain contact. Maybe send an updated version of your resume, ask for information and referrals, perhaps they could be a guest speaker in your class, and so on

What Will You Gain?

- career INFORMATION
- job TRENDS
- a sense of CONFIDENCE
- clarified or identified career GOALS
- identification of alternative career PATHS
- strategy to the HIDDEN JOB MARKET
- personal CONTACTS
- identification of industry RESOURCES
- control of your FUTURE
- development of LISTENING SKILLS
- an expanded NETWORK
- clarification of weaknesses or where SKILLS can be developed.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR YOUR INFORMATION INTERVIEW

- How did you get into this field? Why did you choose it?
- Tell me about specific projects or assignments you have worked on recently.
- What skills and abilities have you found the most useful?
- How did you prepare yourself for this kind of work? What preparation would you suggest for someone who wants to enter the field now?
- What other career areas are related to your work?
- Is there advice you might give someone who is starting in this field?
- What are some of the problems, issues, barriers I may encounter in trying to reach my goals?
- What kinds of skills would you expect in an assistant who has just joined your company?
- How does your role fit into the overall operation of this organization?
- What are anticipated trends for this industry over the next few years?
- What is the best way to search for work in this industry?
- Would you critique my resume and give me suggestions for improvement?
- Could you give me the names of other people in the industry who might be valuable contacts?
- May I use your name when I contact them?
- Is there anything else that you feel I should know about the industry?
- there a peak hiring season?
- What are your hiring procedures?
- If you were to post a position, where would you post it?
- Is it possible to take a tour of the company?
- How long does it usually take to move from one step to another in this career?
- What is the salary range for various levels in this field?
- Tell me about the positive and negative aspects of this career...
- How do you stay current with industry trends?
- What personal attributes do you think are essential to success?
- Where could I get current resource material on this industry?
- Which professional journals or associations are affiliated with this career?
- If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same career? Why?
- Does your company utilize the web for business? If so, for what purposes?
- How has this industry restructured to survive the new workplace demands?