

TIP SHEET
Speaking with Employers
Business Intros & Informational Interviews

GREETING AN EMPLOYER

The professional handshake has been changed by the pandemic.

Alternatives to Handshakes – Decide how you want to greet an employer BEFORE the event. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) offers these suggestions.

- Place your right hand over your heart and briefly explain your cultural view.
- Hold both of your hands together and give an affirming nod.
- Put your hand over your heart and smile while saying “Such a pleasure to meet you.” (No apology needed).
- Say something like this with neutral body language, “Thank you, but I would prefer not to shake hands. I am very excited to meet you though!”

BUSINESS INTROS

Definition / Purpose

- Brief synopsis (30-60 seconds / 160-190 words) of your education, career goals, interests, college / work experience, and skills.
- First step in the marketing process when looking for work placements, jobs, or mentors.

Components / Sample

1) Introduce yourself 2) Education 3) Career Goal 4) College Experience 5) Disability-related Skill 6) Closing.

(1) Good afternoon, my name is Janine Wood. (2) I am completing my Carpentry and Renovation Technician diploma at Humber. (3) I am interested in a career in green carpentry in the residential housing sector. (4) While at college, I have been involved in working with sustainable materials and using alternative “green” construction practices to create environmentally friendly homes. (5) I have advanced math skills in geometry, calculations, and precision measuring. Being competent in using sin, cosine, and tangent saves me a lot of time. (6) Could you please tell me how your company is incorporating green construction practices

Business Intro Template

1. Hello, my name is _____.
2. I am completing my diploma/degree in _____ at Humber / Seneca.
3. I am interested in a career in (or position as a) _____ in the _____ field (industry).
4. I have been involved (during college) in _____.
5. And developed skills in _____. I have also had an internship position (employment) as a _____ with _____ and discovered that I really enjoy _____.
6. Could you tell me more about _____.

FLIP THE SCRIPT

A Disability Positive Career Journey - Position your disability positively, so you can stand out for all the right reasons!!! Check out Tim Rose, Senior Accessibility Consultant, CIBC. His story starts at 9:25, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nA7Dexa3K5I>.

Questions when positioning a disability as a positive.

- What skills have I developed as a result of meeting the challenges of my disability?
- What are my advantages that people might not think of as an advantage? How can I use them? How can I tap into them to accelerate my own career journey?

Include one of these skills in your business intro.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Definition / Purpose

- Semi-formal discussion with a professional or employer to find out specific information about an industry, company, role, student opportunities, and inclusion policies / practices.
- One of the most effective strategies when clarifying your career goals, obtaining insider knowledge, and meeting employers while building your professional network.

The Process

Before

- Rehearse your business intro.
- Determine your focus / goal.
- Select the questions by categories and prepare a list (bring your laptop or notebook).

During

- **Initiate the Conversation**
 - This is your interview, take the lead!
- **Make a Positive First Impression**
 - Dress to impress. Be prepared to speak about yourself and your career goals.
- **Get the Career Advice You Came For (Goal)**
 - Ask questions with an open mind.
 - Ask for the employer's contact info.

After

- Send a follow up "thank you" email.
- Take time to reflect and make notes.

Categories – Choose the category based on the goal(s) for your conversation.

- Conversation starters, industry, company, role, students, and inclusion.

Conversation Starters

- What is the most rewarding thing about working in your industry, company, or role? What is the most challenging?
- How did you start in this field?
- What's it like working at your company?
- What projects are you currently working on?

Industry

- What is the employment outlook in your industry?
- What are the in-demand and future jobs openings?
- What changes are occurring?
- How is the economy affecting your industry?

Company

- What skills or qualities does your company look for in new hires?
- What is the average educational requirement for positions with your firm?
- What are the typical entry-level job titles and functions?
- What are the departments or positions in your organization? How do they differ?
- What does the company do to contribute to its employees' professional development?
- What can you tell me about the corporate culture?

Role

- What has been your career path?
- How did you decide to enter this field?
- How would you describe a typical day on the job?
- What are the top skills for your job?
- Are there opportunities to continue to learn in your profession?

Students

- Can you suggest some ways a student could obtain experience at your company?
- Do you offer summer jobs, placements, or internships for students?
- What job search advice would you give a student like me?
- What's the best advice you'd give to a student interested in this field?

Inclusion / Disability-Related

- How flexible is your work environment for those with diverse needs?
- Do you have resources and activities in place to promote workplace balance and well-being?
- Do you offer a range of tools, training, and technology to support people with different learning styles?
- Do you have an accessibility policy?
- What do inclusive hiring practices mean to your organization?
- In what ways does your company value diversity?

TIPS TO REMEMBER

- Determine your focus, choose and rehearse your questions.
- Keep the conversation friendly, brief, and with purpose.
- Engage with active listening skills to demonstrate interest.
- Be respectful of time.
- REMEMBER, Professionalism = Preparation = Confidence.
- RELAX, this is not a job interview! You're in charge!

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