



Informational Interviews

Informational Interviews are an effective way to research and network. You'll learn details about the industry, company, and position of the person you are interviewing, and have an opportunity to begin a professional relationship with this person.

Prepare & Practice

Study up on industry lingo, who the players are, and important trends. You don't want to waste your expert's time asking Google-able questions. Work on your listening and conversation skills.

Keep Your Introduction Short

Prepare a brief explanation about yourself: "Here's my background, here's what I'm thinking, and I'd like your feedback." They need to understand what you're looking for.

Set the Tone

You want to leave a positive impression and enough information for them to recommend you to others. At the beginning state that you're interested in talking to more industry experts during your information interview. If you wait until the end to ask for other referrals, they might be caught off guard. Ask about and respect their time constraints.

Think Like a Journalist

Prepare informed, intelligent questions. Gently ask, then listen.

- How do you get into this line of work?
- What's changing in the sector?
- What kinds of skills are needed to do well in this industry?

Deliberately Test Your Hypothesis

Your goal is to grasp the reality of the industry and job so you can decide if it's right for you. Don't shy away from sensitive topics, like:

- What are the worst parts of your job?
- What didn't you know before you got into this industry that you wish someone had told you?
- Based on what you know about my background, what do you see as my weaknesses?

Follow Up With Gratitude

Thank the person for their time via email or send a handwritten note. Your thank-you letter should describe how the person was helpful to you. Keep in touch and give back. Invite them to an upcoming conference or networking event for example.

