

# CAREER INFORMATION INTERVIEWING (NETWORKING)

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The information interview is a key tool that will assist you in obtaining information that you need to identify careers which will:

- Call for the skills that are your best, and which you most enjoy using.
- Allow you to work in environments which are most conducive to your best performance.
- Match the goals and values that are important in your life.

You can get this up-to-date information from professionals who are currently employed in the field.

## PURPOSE of the Career Information Interview:

**Obtain** information about career areas, and the experiences of people in career areas of your choice.

**Meet** contact people who share your enthusiasm, similar talents, and interests, in career areas of interest to you.

**Gain Experience and Self-Confidence** in interviewing with professionals, in discussing yourself, and in exploring your career interests.

**The Information Interview** is different from a Job interview in that you are determining whether a career field is right for you. You are asking the questions and evaluating the information presented about a career of interest.

**HOW TO DO IT...**These are the steps to follow in order to conduct a helpful and successful interview. It also assists you in developing a **CONTACT NETWORK** in career fields you like.

1. Identify the:

- **values** in your life which are most important to you:
- **goals** that you wish to accomplish in your lifetime;
- **environmental factors** which are most conducive to your best performance; and
- the **skills** that you do well and enjoy using.

2. Identify and do career research on fields of interest to you, using your self-assessment (Career Cruising).

3. Compile a list of individuals working in the career fields you would like to explore. Use family members, friends, teachers/professors, yellow pages, professional directories and associations.

4. Request an appointment by telephone or letter to interview these individuals, preferably at their place of work. The purpose of this visit is to obtain information, not to seek employment. Prepare questions to elicit information which enables you to match what you know about yourself with what they know about the field. Avoid questions that can be answered "yes" or "no."

5. **Dress** as if it were an actual job interview. Arrive early for your appointment. Be courteous. Take the initiative in conducting the interview. Do not exceed your requested time (20-30 minutes.)

6. If offered, record the names and addresses, telephone numbers or e-mail addresses of new contact persons during the interview. Make a record of other information as soon as possible after the interview, not while it is in progress. Taking notes during the interview can be distracting.

7. Send a "snail mail" thank you note immediately following each interview. A "real thank you note" sent via US mail will remind the person who you spoke with about your conversation.

8. Follow-up on any leads provided.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK IN YOUR INFORMATION INTERVIEW:

1. How did you get into this field (educational background, career path / work experience)?

2. What do you do in a typical day or week?

3. What are the most/least interesting aspects of your job?

4. What skills are necessary for this type of work?

5. Where do you see this career field in 2-5 years?

\*\*6. Can you refer me to 2 or 3 other individuals in this career field or related field who would be helpful in discussing these same issues? (\*\*a very important question to ask at your interview)

If time permits, other suggested questions include:

7. What is a typical career path?

8. How long does it take to progress through a successful career path in this organization?

9. What types of training does this organization provide to persons entering this field?

10. What degree of geographic mobility is expected for advancement in this career field?

11. Is a college degree or an advanced academic degree required for promotion?

12. What are the salary ranges for different positions in this field?

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