

Current Literature

An information interview is not a job interview, but an invaluable opportunity to learn about a career that interests you. Consider it a great way to “pre-screen” a particular industry, career field or job. Informational interviews are typically 10 to 20 minute structured conversations during which you obtain answers to your specific questions that will help you build a picture of what it might be like to work in this occupation or industry.

The informational interview is one of the most valuable sources of occupational information you will ever use because it is an unmatched opportunity to obtain an intimate insider view of a job or profession. While an informational interview is based on the assumption you do not know a lot about this job/career, you certainly should know something about the field. Be sure to do your research first so you do not waste a person’s valuable time.

Another important thing to remember is that an informational interview occurs between you and the person who is doing work that interests you **now**, rather than five or ten years from now.

Keep in mind also that an informational interview is not the same as a courtesy interview granted by someone who has the power to hire you. It is a search for truthful career and occupational information, rather than a “clever” ploy to get your foot in the door.

EMPLOYERS SAY...

“If the informational interview turns into a conversation with no specific focus, the student is antagonizing rather than conducting an informational interview.”

“You’ve blown it if you haven’t done your preliminary homework and prepared a list of good questions to which you want truthful answers.”

“Use the KISS theory (keep it short and simple) when asking for the informational interview. Be sure to identify yourself clearly, give pertinent data, and explain what it is you are seeking.”

“During the interview, be specific about what you want to know. Have a list of well thought-out questions.”

“I particularly admire students who respect the agreed upon time limits even when the conversation is going quite well.”

“An e-mail thank you note is an ideal way to ask for feedback on a resume attachment. Now, the resume is in my e-mail when my boss asks me for a referral.”

“After the interview, consider your reaction to the information you gathered (e.g., number of hours and type of commitment described, what do you need to do make yourself competitive for this industry or job? Do you think you will be satisfied with the challenges this field offers?) Most important, how do the new facts and understanding you have acquired fit in with your goals and values.”

“It’s great to take limited notes, but don’t allow your note-taking to distract or interrupt your rapport.”

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Occupational Questions:

- What skills are required for this profession?
- What type of educational preparation is required for this career?
- What kind of work or internship experience would be required or helpful?
- What types of entry-level positions exist in this field?
- What are the typical career paths and opportunities for advancement?
- What is the occupational outlook for this field?

Semi-Personal Questions:

- How did you get started in this career?
- What do you enjoy most about your work?
- What do you like least?
- What advice would you give to someone pursuing a career in this industry?

HELPFUL RESOURCES

www.jobweb.com/Resumes_Interviews—Career development and job search advice for new college graduates.

www.vault.com— Click on “Job Advice,” then “Interview Questions.”

Visit the CSPD website for more professional development tips at <http://www.sbm.temple.edu/cspd>

Add the Fox Center for Student Professional Development to your Blackboard Organizations.

Quick Tips

DO...

- Decide which format you will use to ask for the informational interview, (i.e. telephone, in-person, email or snail mail.)
- Rehearse asking for the interview. State your name clearly and provide pertinent information about yourself.
- Ask, "could you spend ten minutes to answer a few questions about your career or industry?"
- Appeal to the person's expertise within his/her field as most people like to think they have valuable advice to offer.
- Conduct some basic research on this field BEFORE the interview.
- Do have an idea why you are interested in this career.
- Listen for truth, not what you want to hear.
- Remember to send a thank you note.
- Get more than one perspective.

DON'T...

- Think of the information interview as a job interview. Instead consider it a conversation to gather valuable career information.
- Offer your resume during the interview.
- Expect to be offered a job.

CSPD Overview

The Center for Student Professional Development (CSPD) is a comprehensive Fox School of Business resource focused on preparing you for entry into the professional business environment.

Besides academic preparation, "professional development" is an important component of your university experience. Because of that, the Fox School of Business has integrated professional development into the multi-year curriculum.

As an undergraduate business major at the Fox School, you have access to the services and resources of CSPD. Your utilization of CSPD is an investment in your professional development that will ensure you develop the requisite skills to locate meaningful internships, co-ops and permanent jobs.



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Center for Student Professional Development

On-the-Go Series

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

