

What is an informational interview?

- A professional meeting where you speak with an employer in your field of interest
- Gain a first-hand perspective from someone who has been in your shoes
- Build your network and connections
- Increase your knowledge of the industry, position, and company
- Enhance your professional communication

Rules for informational interviewing

- Do NOT ask for a job (you are gathering information)
- Come well prepared
 - Research the company (company's website, newspaper, google, etc.)
 - Research the individual (LinkedIn, company's website, google, etc.)
 - Bring thoughtful and tailored questions
 - Bring something to write with and on
 - Bring business cards if you have them
- Treat as you would an interview
 - Arrive early
 - Wear professional-dress clothes
 - Don't chew gum
 - Turn cell phone off (not on silent, but off)
- Prepare an elevator pitch
 - A 30 second overview/introduction of yourself including:
 - Why you are there
 - What has made you interested in this area and why it is a good fit (education, work, volunteer experience, etc.)
 - What you are hoping to get out of this experience (goals for the short amount of time you have together)
 - Any additional, relevant and positive information to introduce yourself

How to find an employer to informational interview

- Talk with everyone you know, explaining to them the type of professional you are looking for
 - Do they have any friends, coworkers, neighbours, etc. who have a role similar to the professional you are looking for
- Research companies and organizations that have a role similar to the professional you are looking for
 - Contact this person directly by phone (cold call)
 - Example:

"Good Morning Ms. McNamee, my name is Susan Smith and I am a 3rd year student at Brescia University College. I am really interested in a career in marketing and was wondering if it would be possible to set up a 30 minute informational interview with you to further discuss how you were able to get where you are today and any tips or suggestions you have for someone who wants to enter the marketing industry. I hope we can make something work. I will follow up with you on Tuesday morning next week. If you want to speak before then, my phone number is 519-555-1234. Thank you for your time, I look forward to speaking with you Tuesday."

Questions to consider

- How did you get started in your career?
- What is the most challenging part of your current role?
- What education would you recommend for someone wanting to enter the 'marketing' field?
- Do you belong to any associations or memberships?
- Are there any particular experiences you would suggest for someone new to the field?
- What is your favourite part of your role?
- What are the most common job titles for a position like yours?
- From your experience, how have you seen the field change since you started?
- How do you see the field progressing in the future?
- Is there anyone else you would suggest I speak with?

Don't forget to follow up

- Always send a thank you email or note card within 24 hours of your informational interview.
- Choose something specific that you talked about, that you genuinely appreciated
- For example:

"Good Morning Ms. McNamee,

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me today for an informational interview. I really enjoyed hearing about your personal experiences, and the unique path you took to become the Marketing Director at XYZ Company. It was really interesting learning how my psychology degree and volunteer experiences can be an asset in the marketing industry.

*Thank you again for your time,
Susan Smith
ssmith@brescia.ca
519-555-1234"*

How to use the information

- Take notes during your informational interview to help you remember the information
- Right after the informational interview, make more notes while the information is still fresh in your mind
- The notes will help you when you are creating a resume and cover letter for positions in the field and potentially at the particular company
- If a specific contact was referred to you to contact, follow up with this person to set up an informational interview. You now have a recommendation, instead of a cold call.

Resources

- [Working In Canada- Labour Market Information](#)
- [LEDC \(London Economic Development Corporation\)](#)
- [London Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Student Life Centre- Brescia University College](#)
- [The Student Success Centre- Western University](#)