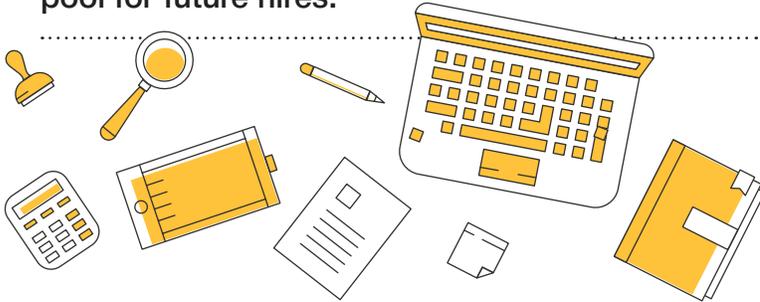


The Informational Interview

An Informational Interview is a meeting in which a potential job seeker seeks advice on their career, the industry, and the corporate culture of a potential future workplace; while an employed professional learns about the job seeker and judges their professional potential and fit to the corporate culture, so building their candidate pool for future hires.



STEP 1: RESEARCH (15 MIN)

1. News headlines on company website

Find a company website and become familiar with the most relevant or biggest news reports.

2. Google company & person interviewing

Do a Google search for company trends and to learn more about the person you are interviewing.

STEP 2: DISCUSSION (20-30 MIN)

1. Hold the conversation

The Focus of the conversation is about the contact – not you. The goal is to get the contact to trust you enough that they will go to bat for you inside the organization.

2. General principles

Take genuine interest in your contact. Follow the energy of the discussion by mirroring the topics and demeanor of your contact. For example: if they talk about hobbies, then you do. If they don't, then you don't.

3. Small talk

Your primary goal with small talk is to build rapport. Consider asking questions like “Would you tell me a bit about your background, and how you come to work for Company X?” “What projects are you working on right now?”

4. Transition to Q&A

Transition to Q&A by saying “Thank you again for your time. I did prepare a few questions for you, so I’m hoping I could ask them now.”

THE TIARA METHOD

Questions shift in tone and depth to turn the contact from a stranger into an advocate. Use the TIARA method to guide you through this:

Trends

“What trends are most impacting your business right now?”

Insights

“What surprises you most about your job/your employer?”

Advice

“What can I be doing right now to prepare myself for this field?”

Resources

“What resources should I be sure to look into next?”

Assignments

“What projects have you done for your employer that you felt has added the most value?”

STEP 3: FOLLOW-UP (ONGOING)

If the contact trusts you with a referral, thank the contact, commit yourself to follow up with the contact to inform about progress, and initiate contact with the referral immediately. If no referral is given, use the “Two Step Close” process: “Our time is up, but thank you so much for your time today – you’ve given me a lot to think about, and it sounds like you’re working for a great organization. I’m going to take a few days to process all of the information you’ve shared. If, on reflection, it seems like your organization and I may make a good mutual fit, is it okay to reach back out to you to get your recommendations for how best to proceed from here?”

THANK YOU'S

It is important for the contact to feel of your sincere gratitude for the time they took out of their day to help you. Within 24 hours, send the contact a thank-you note/email:

Date

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

Thank you for (specific service or offering).

A thoughtful statement of impact/take-away/meaning for you personally____.

Restate the thesis (Thanks again for the time you spent...)_.

Closing

Your Full Name