

According to www.QuintCareers.com, one out of every 200 resumes (some studies put the number as high as 1,500 resumes) results in a job offer. **One out of every 12 informational interviews, however, can result in a job offer.** That's why informational interviewing is the ultimate networking technique, especially considering that the purpose of informational interviewing is not to get job offers. Job offers just happen to be a delightful side benefit to this valuable practice.

The term "informational interviewing" was invented by Richard Bolles, author of the best-selling career guide of all time, *What Color is Your Parachute?* Bolles refers to the process as "trying jobs on to see if they fit you."

Information interviews provide a great opportunity to get in front of people in your field without actually asking for a job. Many alumni will likely be open to speaking or event meeting with you if you assure them that you would value their perspectives and insights are seeking only a brief discussion. While there are advantages and disadvantages to conducting informational interviews live and by phone, consider any opportunity to connect to be a benefit to your search.

Process

1. Create a LinkedIn profile if you haven't already.
2. Seek to create a list of 30+ potential informational interview contacts, using LinkedIn as necessary
3. Reach out to Hofstra alums or other personal contacts via LinkedIn:
 - Use "**Advanced Search**" option on LinkedIn and type "**Hofstra**" into the search box for "**School**"
 - Type in "**Key words**" (e.g. marketing, accounting) based on area/s of interest
 - Do a search and see how many Hofstra alums in your field come up!
 - You may also want to limit the search by geography, depending on your preferences
 - Send "Connect" messages to 20+ individuals for coffee/phone calls using the following format:

"Hello. I am a current Hofstra student (or alum, as appropriate) and am considering entering the (marketing, accounting, etc.) field. I would appreciate the opportunity to have a short discussion with you to gain insight about your career. Please feel free to contact me to arrange a time to meet and/or speak. Thank you in advance. _____ (Your name). My email address is _____ (and my phone number is _____). "

Requesting the Informational Interview

1. Ask to meet for 20 minutes at a location convenient to them
2. Give them basic background information about you and why you are interested in meeting with them
3. Explain that you are simply conducting research to help you make better career decisions (do not ask for a job, and if they ask if that is your purpose, say "no")
4. Remember that people like talking about themselves, so don't be afraid to ask!

Prior to Informational Interview

1. Research interviewee's profile on LinkedIn and Google him/her to get a sense of their career history
2. Research the company by reviewing the company's website and LinkedIn company page
3. Prepare your list of questions and keep it handy during your discussion, especially if conducted by phone
4. Ensure you have the interviewee's contact/meeting location information
5. Confirm the meeting 24 hours before the scheduled time

As you Begin your Informational Interview

1. Thank the interviewee at the beginning of the meeting/call for taking the opportunity to meet/speak
2. Ask the interviewee how much time they have to meet/speak. When you see you are approaching the amount of time originally specified, ask the interviewee if they have time to continue the discussion before asking your next question (this shows respect for their time)
3. Request permission from interviewee (if live) to take notes of your conversation for future reference. Do so in any case if discussion takes place by phone.
4. Re-iterate to your interviewee that you are entering the _____ profession and are looking to learn as much as possible before doing so; you will keep everything the interviewee shares in confidence.

Suggested Informational Interview Questions

1. How did you get started in this field/company?
2. What skills or advanced degrees are required to enter this field?
3. What do you like most about your current role?
4. What personality traits/characteristics do employers in this field value?
5. What is a typical day or week on the job look like?
6. What are the greatest challenges/opportunities in your field?
7. What events have been most impactful in your career?
8. I see from your LinkedIn profile that you transitioned from _____ to _____. What was that like?
9. What surprised you the most when you made that change?
10. What have you learned about yourself as you've grown in your career?
11. How do you/does your firm use social media to accomplish business objectives?
12. What keeps you/your boss "up at night?"
13. What are some of the key success factors in your line of work?
14. To what do you attribute your success to date?
15. What are some resources that you've used to learn about/keep up to date with your field (media, professional organizations, influential figures, etc.)
16. What would you recommend for someone interested in this field to do to get started?
17. Do you have any other general advice for me?
18. Can you please suggest several other individuals with whom I can speak as well? (Get emails if possible)
19. Would you be open to my using your name in contacting them?
20. Would you be willing to make an introduction on my behalf?

After the Informational Interview

1. Ask for a business card if you've met live with an interviewee
2. Make sure you have the interviewee's email address (and preferably phone number) before you say goodbye
3. Write a thank-you note for the meeting within 24-48 hours as if it were an actual interview, thanking them for the opportunity to meet/speak and for sharing their perspectives and insights
4. Do not ask interviewee for a job or for contacts at his/her firm to get a job. If the interviewee offers to connect you to someone within the firm, however, you can send a resume, make a call, etc. as s/he suggests.
5. Seek out ways to stay in touch with interviewees going forward. Can you identify and send an article or two on a topic of interest to them? Can you email to congratulate them as they change roles or get promoted? Look for ways to stay on their radar over the next year or two – or beyond!

See also: http://www.quintcareers.com/information_interview.html

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2015/03/04/30-questions-to-ask-in-an-informational-interview/4/>