



## Information Interview Sample Questions

### ***What is an Informational Interview?***

An informational interview is one of the few interviews in which you are in control of the questions asked. It is a chance to learn more about a specific career without making a long-term commitment of your time or money. You can find out about the responsibilities, rewards, and problem areas inherent in a specific career by asking questions of people already established in that field.

When you begin your program of information interviewing, keep in mind that:

1. ***You are not asking for a job.*** You are simply asking for information and advice, so you are not putting this person on the spot.
2. ***You have the right, and a responsibility to yourself,*** to seek advice and information from those who can best help you.
3. ***Because you are interviewing them, you are in charge***—they can relax.
4. ***Why are Informational Interviews necessary?***

Informational interviews provide valuable information to help you decide if a particular career is right for you, and if it is, how you can prepare yourself to work in that field. If you've already made a tentative career choice, informational interviews can help you to learn how to get a job in your chosen field and provide valuable insight on obtaining success.

Be sure of your motives before you decide to arrange informational interviews. Scheduling an interview for information when you really want a job interview can ruin your chances with the employer. In addition, it could make a valuable contact person hesitant to grant future requests for informational interviews.

### ***How to conduct an Informational Interview***

#### **First:**

You'll need to identify people who can be helpful to you—those who are active and knowledgeable in the career field you're researching. And it's simple to do that. Just ask. Ask all the people you know if they are acquainted with anyone in your field of interest who might be willing to talk to you. Then ask if you can use their name as a reference when you contact that person.

#### **Next:**

**PREPARE** — Inform yourself about the field, the organizations, and the person you will be interviewing. Written and taped materials in libraries and reference rooms can help you.

**PREPARE**—a list of the questions you want to ask, including some that you know will be interesting to answer.

**PRACTICE** — by interviewing people for information whenever you get a chance (formally or informally). It's fun. You'll find that people really like to talk about themselves and their work.

**EXPRESS** — interest; listen attentively; show enthusiasm and appreciation. Be aware of your non-verbal cues.



## A. Starting Out

1. How did you get your start? What were some of the most important factors contributing to your success?
  - 1.1. If you were starting out again, would you do anything differently?
  - 1.2. How would you advise someone to start building a career in your field?
  - 1.3. Where would you start?
2. Experience
  - 2.1. What steps should they take? What experience will be expected? How can I get that experience? In what companies, departments, positions? What positions lead to dead ends?
3. Education & Training
  - 3.1. Did you participate in a formal training program? Where?
  - 3.2. What education or training is most valued?
  - 3.3. What is necessary educational background for this field?
  - 3.4. What courses are particularly valuable?
  - 3.5. What areas of knowledge are most important for advancement in the field?
  - 3.6. What degrees? Certification?
  - 3.7. What educational institutions would you suggest?

## B. The Job

- 3.8. What is a typical workweek like for you? What do you actually do?
- 3.9. 2. What are some of the rewards of your occupation? Your field? What do you like most about your work?
- 3.10. What are some of the difficulties, frustrations, and most frequently recurring problems?
- 3.11. How flexible can you be in this field/position? Can you work at varied hours? Can you
- 3.12. arrange your own hours? What latitude do you have to plan your own time?
- 3.13. What are your major responsibilities in this job? What part do you play in deciding priorities?

## C. Advancement

- 3.14. What are some typical mistakes or errors which prevent a person from advancing in
- 3.15. this field? From succeeding in this kind of work?
- 3.16. Is there personal advice you would give a person wanting to advance in your field?
- 3.17. Wanting to build a career?
- 3.18. What is the range of income possible for persons in this field? What is the salary structure? What is the starting salary range? The range at different levels of advancement? What benefits accrue to these positions?
- 3.19. What is developing in this field? Company? Industry? Where do you see the greatest needs? What are the most important areas in this field? The key problems, the major problems?



- 3.20. What are your projections for the future in this industry? What areas do you feel promise the most opportunity? The most growth? Where is expansion taking place? In what markets? With what products?
- 3.21. Is there a deficit of qualified personnel in any part of this field? Where is the best place to look for jobs?
- 3.22. Is most of the hiring here done on an external or internal basis?

**D. Special Interests**

- 3.23. Are there many women/minorities in this field?
- 3.24. How effective are affirmative action programs in this field? Have you seen the proportions of women/minority managers change over the past few years?
- 3.25. Is there any particular advice you would give to a woman/minority job candidate in this field?

*Information Interview Sample Questions*

<b>Contact Person:</b>	<b>Company Name:</b>	<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
	<b>Website:</b>		<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Appt Date:</b>		<b>Appt Time</b>	<b>Appt Location:</b>

- 3.26. What are the daily duties of this occupation? What does a typical day look like for you?
- 3.27. What skills do you use in your job?
- 3.28. What are the physical demands of this occupation? (standing, lifting, climbing)
- 3.29. What are the mental/emotional demands of this occupation? (high stress, customers, etc)
- 3.30. What types of hours are typical for this position? (For example: part-time, full-time, seasonal,
- 3.31. contractual)
- 3.32. Do you have flexible hours?
- 3.33. Do you work alone or with others?
- 3.34. What types of communication skills do you see as being essential for success in this type of position?
- 3.35. What challenges are involved in this job?
- 3.36. What types of problem solving are typical of the position?
- 3.37. What type of daily/weekly/monthly goals do you set and achieve? Would you say this job is creative? Do you put your own mark on your work? Is there the latitude to be creative in this position?
- 3.38. What sort of demand is there for people working in this occupation and is this likely to change in
- 3.39. the future?



- 3.40. On a scale of 1 to 10, what level of organization does this job call for? Is that independent or imposed organization?
- 3.41. Is your position self-directed or is there an external control?
- 3.42. What is your work arrangement? Contract? 9 to 5? Job share? Consulting? Talent pooling? Team?
- 3.43. Where do you work?
- 3.44. Could you work from home?
- 3.45. What specific requirements (experience, licenses, equipment) are currently in demand for working in this field?
- 3.46. What specific training/education is required for this occupation?
- 3.47. Which training institutions do you recognize in order to obtain the needed training?
- 3.48. With my existing skills (show your résumé) and the training that you recognize, what positions/job titles might I be qualified for if I completed this training?
- 3.49. Is there room for you to move up in your field?
- 3.50. Increased salary? \_\_\_\_\_ Increased time-off? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.51. Would it be possible to pursue this career by training on-the-job rather than through formal training at school or an institution?
- 3.52. What type of training is available?
- 3.53. What are the benchmarks of success in this job?
- 3.54. How did you choose this field?
- 3.55. If you had another chance would you choose this field again?
- 3.56. Were there any particularly significant people along the way?

**E.** Referrals to other Potential Informational Interviews:

Name/Company:

Title:

Phone:

**F.** THANK YOU NOTE