

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING



The purpose of informational interviewing is to learn about career fields, determine if a particular career is right for you, and to make connections with people and expand your network.

Step 1: Research and Prepare

- Research careers of interest using resources like [O*NET](#)
- Plan to talk to multiple professionals working in a field of interest
- Write down open-ended questions you'd like to ask and have them available during your informational interview. Open-ended questions start with words like "how", "what", "why", and "when?"

Step 2: Identify People to Interview

- Consider alums, friends, relatives, parents of friends, and neighbors
- Ways to find alums:
 - Faculty suggestions
 - [InterAction](#)
 - [LinkedIn](#)

Step 3: Schedule an Interview

- Use email/phone to reach out to your contact
- Introduce yourself clearly, sound enthusiastic, and let them know how you got their name/contact information
- Make sure they know you are seeking information about their career versus asking for an internship/job
- Ask for a specific amount of time (i.e. 15-20 minutes)
- Determine location of interview (i.e. worksite, coffee shop, virtual meeting)

Step 4: Follow-Up

- Immediately after the interview, write down key points, new ideas, and any additional questions you have
- Send an email or handwritten thank you within 24-48 hours

Sample Email and LinkedIn Connection Request



Dear John,

I am a sophomore at the College of St. Benedict, majoring in Communication, and am interested in learning more about the marketing field. I found your information through the alum database and wanted to ask if I could do an informational interview with you to learn more about your position. I have a few questions prepared and would hope to only take 15-20 minutes of your time. Would you be willing to meet and/or talk with me at a time convenient for you?

I look forward to the opportunity to learn more about the marketing field. Thank you!

Jane Bennie

QUESTIONS TO ASK...



How did you decide to get into this field? What steps did you take to enter the field?

What is a typical day like for you?

What do you like most about your job and why? What do you like least and why?

Describe the work environment where you work. (Location, pace, flexible work schedules, etc.)

Describe ways you stay up-to-date in your field.

What training would you recommend for someone hoping to enter this field?

What qualities would you use to describe someone who would excel in this career?

What type of stress/stressors do you experience on the job?

What might an entry-level salary range be for someone starting in this field?

What are the employment trends in this field? Is the field expanding? Taking any new directions?

What kind of work/internship/volunteer experiences would be helpful to prepare for this field?

What related occupations might you recommend I learn more about?

Are there other professionals in this field you recommend I contact?



Next steps...

- Find alums in careers of interest and schedule informational interviews.
- Review additional resources on exploring careers in the [XPD Canvas Course](#).

