

Step Two

Networks and Contacts

Information Interview – Functional Questions

Tool: Informational Interview

Functional Questions

One of the best ways to prepare for career transition is the informational interview. As the name implies, this interview differs from the traditional interview in its intent; not to obtain employment, but to obtain information. Informational interviews can help you expand your professional network, learn more about your chosen field, and build your confidence for future job interviews.

Effective informational interviewing starts with a specific job target in mind. Once you've done your research and know something about your goal and the industry, you can start to seek out professionals that will be willing to meet with you. You can choose to meet with people doing the job or the hiring managers. You may benefit by speaking with both. From the professional in the field, you'll get perspective on what the job involves on a daily basis, trends in the industry, and how the job matches up with your interests and abilities. From the hiring manager, you'll learn what companies look for in candidates, how they evaluate skills and education, and what a typical career path might look like.

Here is a list of questions you might ask:

1. What are your major job responsibilities?
2. What sort of education did you need to get this job?
3. What has been your career path from college to present?
4. What are the greatest pressures, strains or anxieties in this kind of work?
5. What are the toughest problems and decisions with which you must cope?
6. What are the dissatisfying aspects of the work? Is this typical of the field?
7. How would you describe the atmosphere/culture of your work place?
8. Have I left you out any important questions that would be helpful in learning about the job or occupation?

Source:

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/infointerviews/a/infointervquest.htm>



20 More Informational Interviewing questions (source: Candace Moody)

1. On a typical day in this position, what do you do?
2. What training or education is required for this type of work?
3. What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this job?
4. What part of this job do you find most satisfying? most challenging?
5. How did you get your job?
6. What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?
7. What entry level jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
8. What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?
9. How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?
10. Is there a demand for people in this occupation?
11. What special advice would you give a person entering this field?
12. What types of training do companies offer persons entering this field?
13. What are the basic prerequisites for jobs in this field?
14. Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
15. What do you think of the experience I've had so far in terms of entering this field?
16. From your perspective, what are the problems you see working in this field?
17. If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? Why? What would you change?
18. With the information you have about my education, skills, and experience, what other fields or jobs would you suggest I research further before I make a final decision?
19. What do you think of my resume? Do you see any problem areas? How would you suggest I change it?
20. Who do you know that I should talk to next? When I call him/her, may I use your name?

