

# Informational Interview



## What is informational interviewing?

- Informational Interviewing is talking with another person in an informal way about his or her work.
- The interview generally takes place at the interviewee's place of employment.
- It is *not* a job interview

## How do I benefit?

You will:

- Gain first-hand current information about a career field.
- Gain some idea of future prospects of a field, job or firm.
- Expand your network of contacts for future interviews.

## How do I arrange an informational interview?

Depending on the method you prefer, you can:

- Telephone directly using a prepared statement of your intent.
- Send a letter stating your intent and make a follow-up call.
- Specify that you need no more than 20 minutes of time.

## What questions do I ask the interviewee?

Some general questions include:

- How did you decide to get into this field & what steps did you take to do so?
- What training would you recommend for someone wanting to enter this field?
- What are the tasks you do in a typical work day?
- Do you know anyone else with whom I can talk, where else can I go for more information?

## What do I do to follow up?

- After the interview, immediately send a thank-you note to the interviewee.
- The note can be handwritten and should express your appreciation of the interviewee's time.
- Keep a record of the information you learned from the interview.
- Set up your next interview or follow the appropriate next step.

## Sample Letter of Introduction

Your Name  
1150 W. Mission Rd.  
San Marcos, CA 92069

Mr. Joe Doe  
Vice President of \_\_\_\_\_  
XXX Corporation  
1000 N. Lincoln St.  
Anytown, CA 00000

Dear Mr. Doe,

I am currently a student at Palomar College in a career planning class, and I have been assigned a project to complete. The project concerns an investigation of an occupation that is of interest to me. Would you be willing to talk with me about a career in \_\_\_\_\_ in a company such as yours?

\_\_\_\_\_ is an occupation that interests me most at the present time. Career inventories indicate that I should seriously consider this field. Right now, I need to talk to someone who is actually working in the field in order to gather information on which to base my career decision.

I will contact your office next Monday in the hope that I can set up an interview with you. Please be assured I am not using this request for an interview as a way to ask for a job. I need your advice and more education before I start to seek a job. I will be most appreciative of receiving any information I can from you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

## Telephone Request

It may seem hard to make a phone call to a stranger. Here are some examples of phone scripts to help you get started. It's important to state your name, purpose, and ask for an appointment with the appropriate person. This direct approach is generally effective.

### Example:

Hello Mr. Doe. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a student in a career search class at Palomar College. I am working on a career planning project that involves some research about \_\_\_\_\_ (name of occupation and/or organization).

I'd like to meet with you for no more than 20 minutes to ask you a few questions. May I suggest next week as a time for the informational interview?

*Or*

Hello Mr. Doe, this is \_\_\_\_\_. My instructor at Palomar College, Lisa Romain suggested that I talk with you about career opportunities in \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling to find out when it would be convenient to meet? I'd appreciate no more than 20 minutes of your time.