THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

A. What is the Purpose of an Informational Interview?
   - Source of information
   - Source of referrals
   - Source of access to other people
   - Source of time and location

B. Primary Contacts
   - Do what you want to do, and do it well
   - Are successful in any profession - they understand the process of achieving goals
   - Enjoy what they do
   - Deal with other people and are connected
   - Active retired person
   - Former schoolmates
   - Any group you belong to
   - More specifically:
     ◦ fellow workers
     ◦ anyone who provides a service and frequently deal with people constantly such as bankers, lawyers, politicians, doctors, clergy, and civic leaders
     ◦ anyone important in the business community; for example, someone in the Chamber of Commerce
     ◦ members of your family, friends and neighbors
     ◦ former employers and business associates
     ◦ members of the academic community

C. How to Set Up an Informational Interview
   - In person
   - E-mail/brief written request
   - Phone call
   - Followup as appropriate

D. Tips
   - State your reason for visits up front - seeking career advice/guidance, learning more about industry
   - Prepare to ask good questions
   - Bring paper and pen for note-taking, and have a resume ready to share
   - Keep the appointment, and be prompt
   - Make the interview brief (20 minutes or less), and stay within your appointment time
   - Ask for an introduction or a referral
   - Always send a thank you note
   - Maintain a record of your contacts, referrals, and highlights of the interview

E. Ask Yourself After the Interview
   - What do I think of the work environment?
   - What about the employees?
   - The function, goals and values of the workplace?
   - The level of responsibility?
   - Knowledge and skills required?
   - Is this a good match for me?
INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your background? How did you reach this position?
2. What do you like best about your position? Least?
3. What is a typical day for you?
4. What qualifications make you successful in your work?
5. What skills are required?
6. What education is required?
7. What do you find most challenging?
8. What can you share about the state of your industry/department/organization?
9. What are the typical salary ranges for this position?
10. How do most people enter this profession?
11. Which of my skills are strong compared to other job seekers in this field?
12. What do you think of the experience I’ve had so far?
13. What professional journals or associations should I know of?
14. Is there anything else you think I need to know?
15. Who else would you recommend I speak with? When I call, may I use your name?

Script for Getting the Interview

A) GREETING
   “I’m currently researching ________ and thought you’d be an excellent resource.”
   OR: “...and John Smith thought you’d be an excellent resource.”
   OR: “Jane Doe suggested I call you.”

B) PURPOSE
   “I’m interested in_______ because ______.”

C) REASSURANCE
   “I want to emphasize that I’m gathering information and do not expect you to know about
   any job opportunities. I’m hoping to benefit from your knowledge and experience.”

D) ASKING FOR A MEETING
   “Would you be available to meet with me on _______ for about 20 minutes, or is there a
   better time?

E) CONFIRM TIME and LOCATION
   “I’ll meet you in your office on ______.”
   “Thank you.”

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For more information, contact Career Connection at career@ucsd.edu or (858)822-2633