



Career Connection
MNTC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Informational Interview Guide



What is an Informational Interview?

Informational interviewing is a technique that is used to gather career information from professionals in the field. Contact someone in a selected career field and ask if he or she is willing to give you time to discuss careers. Emphasize the fact that you are not looking for a job, but for information which might assist you in your career decisions and job search. Conducting an informational interview will not only enable you to learn firsthand about the particular kind of work in a specific career and/or organization, but it is also a great networking tool.

THE PROCESS

- Identify people who work in fields or companies of interest to you.
- Contact your leads and explain you are seeking personalized information about their field.
- Ask if you can meet at their worksite for an informational interview which would take about 20 minutes.
- Review your research on the field/industry and research the specific company you will visit.
- Call the day before to confirm.
- Arrive 10 minutes early.

FOLLOW-UP

- Ask for a business card when leaving the individual's office.
- Write and send a thank you note to each individual with whom you spoke, and send by mail/email within 24-hours after the informational interview.

Why conduct an Informational Interview?

One out of every 200 resumes results in a job offer. One out of every 12 informational interviews, however, results in a job offer.

(Compiled from Quintessential Careers: quintcareers.com)

Informational interviewing is the ultimate networking technique, especially considering that the purpose of informational interviewing is not to get job offers. Job offers just happen to be a delightful side benefit to the valuable practice.

The informational interview is designed to produce information. This information will help you choose or refine a career path. You can learn how to break in and find out if you have what it takes to succeed.

It is an expanded form of chatting with your network contacts. This process of spending time with one of your network contacts in a highly focused conversation that will provide you with key information you need to launch or boost your career.

You accomplish several things when you go out on informational interviews:

- You obtain a great deal of information about your career field and the skills needed to do that job effectively. It is also helpful, for creating your resume.
- You gain a perspective of work that goes beyond the limitations of job titles, allowing you to see not only what skills are required for the job, but also how you might fit into a work setting.
- You gain insight into the hidden job market (employment opportunities that

are not advertised).

- You have the opportunity to make personal contacts with working professionals.
- You become aware of the needs of the employers and the realities of employment.
- You gain confidence in talking with people while learning what you need to know. This exposes you to a variety of jobs and personalities of companies making the search for your “niche” that much easier.

How do I set up an Informational Interview?

Start by making contact with people in the career field.

- **First:** Connect with people you know who are in the career field you are interested in learning more about.
- **Second:** Think about people you know or can easily meet who may know someone in the field you're interested in.
- **Third:** Search the internet, career fairs, or professional organizations just to name a few.

LOCATE CONTACTS

Instructions: List six **prospective** employers who work in your area of interest. These leads can come from people you know, the Internet, or any other source. You are to call each prospect until your interview(s) have been scheduled.



Contact 1

Organization Name:

Individual's Name:

Phone Number:

Contact 4

Organization Name:

Individual's Name:

Phone Number:

Contact 2

Organization Name:

Individual's Name:

Phone Number:

Contact 5

Organization Name:

Individual's Name:

Phone Number:

Contact 3

Organization Name:

Individual's Name:

Phone Number:

Contact 6

Organization Name:

Individual's Name:

Phone Number:

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW PHONE SCRIPT



When you are not looking for employment, but simply want to obtain information about a type of job, it is called an “informational interview.” It is easy to talk to someone you know, but making a cold call requires some preparation. The benefits are well worth the effort and you will find that it gets easier each time. Use the following as a guide to help you set an appointment for your informational interview.

SAMPLE SCRIPT

[Ms. Forbes,] I’m [Jill Smith.] I am taking a course in Career Exploration Education at Moore Norman Technology Center in which one of my projects is to interview someone in a field of interest to me. I am very interested in [Medical Assisting], and since you are knowledgeable in the field, I would like very much to hear some of your personal views. I know you are very busy, but would it be possible to have 20 minutes of your time in the near future to discuss aspects of your job? When would be a convenient time for me to come by the clinic and talk with you?

Now, personalize a script using the contact’s name, your name, and area of interest.

CONTACT WORKSHEET

Instructions: Document your employer informational interview(s).

Organization Name _____

Organization Address _____

Phone Number _____

Person Contacted _____

Person's Title _____

Interview Date _____

Interview Time _____

Organization Name _____

Organization Address _____

Phone Number _____

Person Contacted _____

Person's Title _____

Interview Date _____

Interview Time _____

Organization Name _____

Organization Address _____

Phone Number _____

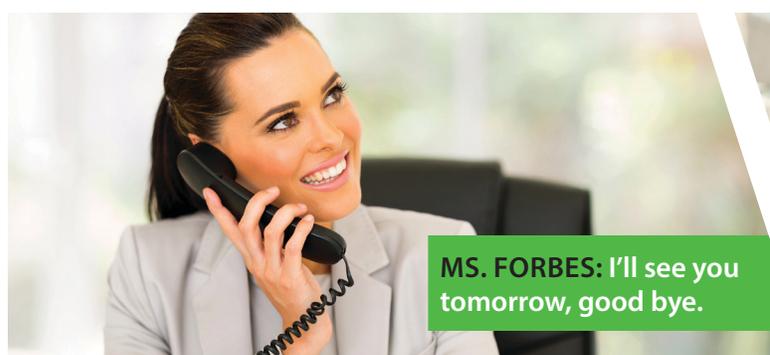
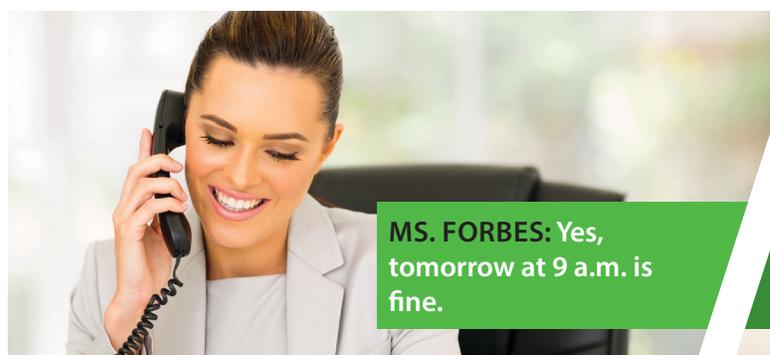
Person Contacted _____

Person's Title _____

Interview Date _____

Interview Time _____

SAMPLE CONFIRMATION SCRIPT



TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE TIPS

- When you call:
 - Know what you want to say, so there are not lots of "ahh"s, "umm"s, and pauses, while the other person waits.
 - Don't talk too quickly, too slowly, too quietly, or too loudly.
 - Do not use inappropriate language.
 - Do not sound unhappy, angry, sad, or bored.
 - Do not chew gum, eat, smoke, or drink while talking on the phone.
- If they have to call you back, make sure:
 - The people who answer your phone are not rude, unprofessional, or negative.
 - You have a way for them to leave a voicemail.
 - You do not have an inappropriate voicemail message that gives a negative impression of who you are.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW WORKSHEET

Person Interviewed: _____ Date of Interview: _____

Person's Title: _____ Organization: _____

Address: _____ Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Questions To Ask

1. How did you decide to become a [_____]? _____

2. What is a typical day like for you? _____

3. What kind of skills would I need to be successful in this industry? _____

4. What is a typical entry-level salary in this profession? How do the salaries progress after five years?

5. What do you like most/least about your job? _____

6. What preparation would you suggest for someone interested in entering this field? _____

7. Do you have any special advice for entering this field? _____

8. Whom do you recommend I contact for more information about job opportunities in this industry? _____

9. May I contact you if necessary in the future? _____

Be sure to thank the person for their time before leaving.

Questions to Ask Yourself After the Interview

1. **Is this a career I would be interested in? (circle one) YES NO**

If so, why? _____

If not, why? _____

2. **What are some things I can do to prepare to achieve this career goal?**

Education: _____

Skills: _____

Experience: _____

Training: _____

Community involvement: _____

Activities: _____

3. **What am I already doing that will help me obtain a career in this field?**

4. **What skills were mentioned in the interview that I already possess that could be added to my resume?**

Skills: _____

BUSINESS CARDS

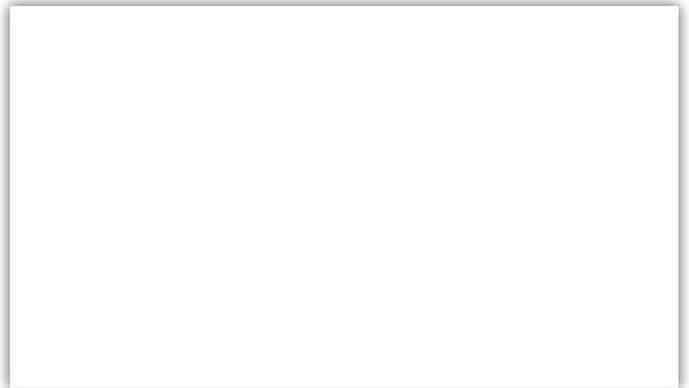
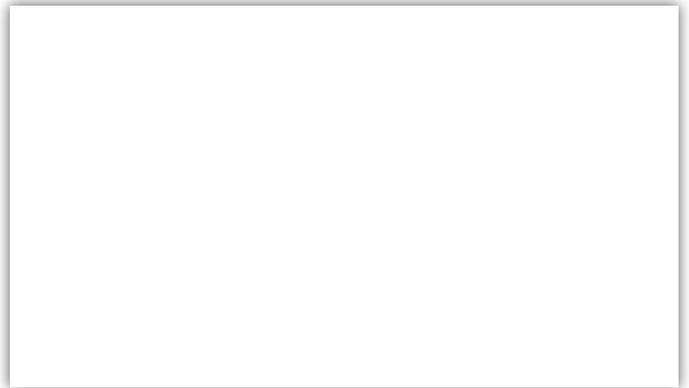
Attach the business card(s) you collect here.

MOORE NORMAN
TECHNOLOGY CENTER

4701 12th Ave. NW
Norman, OK 73069
www.mntc.edu

TINA FITZGERALD, PHR
Employment Services Coordinator

E tina.fitzgerald@mntc.edu
P 405.801.5139 | F 405.360.9989
Mailing Address P.O. Box 4701, Norman, OK 73070-4701



COMMON SCREEN-OUTS

ON PAPER (RESUME, APPLICATIONS, LETTERS):

- No evidence of recently having done the job you are applying for
- Appear better suited for a different job or more interested in a different field
- Over-qualified
- Post-graduate degree with no practical experience
- No evidence you were good at your job
- Mediocre or poor schools grades
- No recent work / education history
- Pattern of staying less than one year
- No work history in this country
- False statements which can be checked
- Hobbies that are controversial, dangerous or could interfere with work
- No references, or they are all unemployed, or listed as your social worker, psychiatrist, addiction counselor, etc.
- Criminal convictions, chronic illness, or legal case brought against an employer
- Having limited availability regarding hours or days
- "Reason for Leaving" raises a concern, fired, e.g. laid-off more than twice, gap after pregnancy and still of child-bearing age
- Gaps in work history
- "Reason for Leaving" does not match other information, for example: "Left for better opportunity," without starting a "better job"
- Asks for the top of their wage/salary range
- Having several past employers are "out-of-business" so reference cannot be checked
- Unprofessional look: misspellings, poor grammar, typos, untidiness
- Filling out an incomplete application, or saying "See Resume"
- Resumes with poor or inappropriate layout, or looks similar to others they've read
- Too long (will be put in the "Read Later" pile which is seldom read)

IN-PERSON (INTERVIEWS, INTERNSHIPS):

- Personality doesn't fit with the company culture or doesn't match what they expected based on the resume or cover letter
- Presentation (dress, non-verbal, style) does not match the company's image, or doesn't match what they expected based on the resume or phone conversation, e.g., age, ethnicity, gender
- Visible tattoos and piercings
- Body odor, cigarettes, or too much perfume/cologne
- Poor eye contact when greeting or talking during an interview
- Demonstrating limited knowledge about, or interest in, the company or job
- Nervous habits, e.g. playing with hair, a twitching eye, or drumming fingers
- One word answers and offering no examples, stories or proof
- Talk too much, argue with, or interrupt the interviewer
- Acting desperate, angry, or showing no emotion at all
- Speaking negatively about past employers, co-workers or supervisors
- "Name drops" too much
- Bringing children or friends to the interview
- Being rude or obnoxious to the receptionist while waiting to be interviewed
- You don't seem to know what is written on your resume or application
- Being late for the interview
- Not knowing current terminology, proper names for tools or procedures, or lacking the level of knowledge or skill expected
- Failing to demonstrate that you offer a hard-to-find skill or attitude
- During internship, failing to demonstrate that they will be one of their best workers and are worth the money to be paid

REFERENCES:

- The person who recommends you is an average to poor employee, or a troublemaker
- The reference shares problems you have had either on the job (e.g. being late, not getting along with others, fired) or in your personal life (addiction, illness, or depression)
- The reference doesn't know the job you're going for, hasn't talked to you recently, or isn't familiar with your skills for the job
- The reference talks about your skills for a different job, rather than the one you are applying for
- Reference does not return phone calls
- The reference focuses on why the company should give you a chance, rather than what you can do for the company
- Your current employer is too excited about, or supportive of you leaving
- Your current employer is reluctant to say anything about you, as if fearful of being sued

INTERNET:

- Offensive email address
- Information on your personal website, blog or social network site which conflicts with company image, values or goals
- Lack of internet or computer skills, seen in your inability to download documents or links they send, or your slow response (should respond within 24-hours)
- Poor spelling, grammar or writing skills demonstrated in emails, a web interview, or online chat
- Information on your internet site or given during a web chat that conflicts with info on resume or given during the interview
- Negative information discovered when they do a search of your name