



Information Interviewing

Research has shown that some of the most successful job seekers had first spent time talking to people in various businesses and organisations before they began actively seeking jobs. Through talking to others, they gained a better idea of how their skills, interests and experiences fit into specific industries and career fields. They also knew first-hand what type of work environment different jobs offered. This process of gathering information through personal contact is known as information interviewing.

Information interviewing is a great way to find out about your career field from experienced industry professionals by targeting your job search to the particular companies, businesses, organisations, and positions which are most suited to your specific skills and abilities. It also helps you develop confidence in approaching others- a skill which proves valuable when developing job leads.

Research the area you want to work in, by asking:

- What types of jobs do the people do?
- What do their roles actually involve?
- What sort of career structure do they have?
- Are there any professional organisations you could contact?
- What about qualifications and training?
- Who are the potential employers?
- What are their specialities?
- Which ones are you going to target?
- Who are you going to target there?

Make use of your contacts:

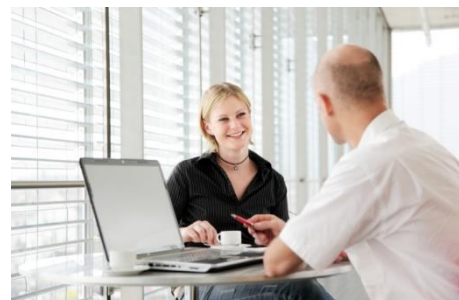
- Decide what you want to achieve from each of your contacts.
- Ask if you can have some of their time to gather information.
- Make a good impression and jump at any opportunities they may offer you.
- Write and thank people when they've given you their time.
- You're not asking for a job- you're asking for advice.
- Keep a record of what you're doing and the information you find out.

Try to get contacts within the area you want to work in:

- Many jobs are never advertised- if you wait for jobs to appear in the paper or vacancy list you will miss a lot of opportunities.
- Make yourself known to your potential employers by networking and/ or creative job searching.
- Build up a network of contacts, making use of everyone you know (family, friends, neighbours, teaching staff, past graduates).
- Get extra contacts through trade directories, careers fairs, exhibitions and employer presentations.

Creative Job Search involves:

- Researching jobs and employers.
- Devising a strategy of how you'll get and use your contacts.
- Networking to find people.
- Getting these people to advise and help you and to meet with you to see that you are really serious.



You'll still need:

- Resume and covering letter.
- Good interview skills.

About the work role:

- Can you tell me some of the things you do in a typical week?
- What are your main responsibilities, actual tasks and priorities?
- What are the skills needed?
- What are the most and least satisfactory aspects of this job for you?
- Is it different from what you expected?
- What sort of person do you have to be, to be really good at this job?

About getting in:

- How did you get into the industry/field?
- Has it changed since you entered?
- If you had to overcome any barriers (age/gender/ethnicity)... how did you do so?
- What experience, qualifications and qualities do employers look for?
- Where are the vacancies advertised?
- Are there any stepping stone jobs or voluntary experience I should look for?

About the organisation and its culture:

- What differentiates this organisation from others?
- Is the structure of the organisation changing?
- What do you view as the benefits and challenges of working for this organisation?
- Can you tell me about your organisation's equal opportunities policy (job sharing, promotion, development, etc.)?

About career development:

- How long do people stay in this organisation?
- What additional responsibilities can staff take on?
- What are some of the typical career paths?
- What type of job might people move on to?
- How is the work changing?
- What qualities or attributes do you need to succeed in this field?

About graduate employment:

- What do employers look for in graduates (academic results, extra-curricular activities, work experience, personal attributes etc.)?
- Are there any internship or work experience programs I could apply for?
- Is there a formal graduate development program?
- What projects can graduates expect to participate in?
- ...about attitudes to older graduates?
- ...about entry level salaries and progression?
- What are the misconceptions people have about working here?

And finally:

- Can you suggest other people I can talk to?
- Can you suggest books, websites or professional organisations to consult?

Remember: While getting work experience and/or information, stop and think: Does what you're finding out about this type of work show that it really suits your aims and interests?

Visit the [Careers Central website](#) for more information and resources.

To improve your employability check out [CareerHubPlus](#) which has an extensive library of information on:

- Job seeking
- Interview techniques and more
- Online resume review

