



Blue Mountain
Community College

Conducting Informational Interviews

An information interview is one that YOU conduct to collect information about an industry, business, specific occupation, or career field. The difference between an informational and standard interview is that in the informational interview YOU are in control and you ask the questions. This does not mean that an informational interview is less professional or requires less preparation.

Three reasons for conducting informational interviews:

1. To gather information about a particular position, company or career field from an individual in that position, company or field.
2. To determine if this is the field you really want to be in.
3. To introduce yourself to perspective employers (this may be your first opportunity to make a great first impression) and provide you with additional networking opportunities.

Step One: Know the career field you desire, research a company you would like to work for and the specific type of position you would like to obtain.

Step Two: Contact the Human Resources Department at the company and explain that you would like to conduct an informational interview with an employee in your desired field (see sample letters packet for an example of a request letter). Try to limit the interview to no more than 30 minutes. This link can help you find perspective employers in any state/region:

<http://www.careerinfonet.org/employerlocator/employerlocator.asp?nodeid=18>

Step Three: Prepare for your informational interview. Select the questions you feel you would like answered from the list of questions (no more than ten) from the "Informational Interview Questions" List provided by BMCC.

Step Four: Contact the individual you have been referred to and establish a meeting time. Keep the informational interview to 30 minutes to be respectful of their time and job demands.

Step Five: On the day of your informational interview, dress in a businesslike manner, arrive for your appointment on time (preferably 5 minutes early), greet your interviewee and shake their hand, be respectful of their time and workplace. Upon conclusion of the interview thank your interviewee and tell them you appreciate their time. **Remember you are interviewing to garner information not get a job.**

Step Six: Write a thank you letter to your interviewee and the Human Resources individual who referred you. (See sample letters packet)

Below are links to some videos about informational interviews:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE1tqZyeWKM&NR=1&feature=fvwp>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMCdxfbnA3w>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyZ7wsF9ujc>



Potential Questions For Informational Interviews

1. What is your job like?

- Could you describe a typical day?
- What are the daily routine tasks?
- Do you make many decisions? If so, what are some examples of typical decisions you would make?
- On a daily basis, are you required to solve problems? If so, could you explain what a typical problem might be?

2. What level of education is required for the position you hold?

- Are there internships and other work experience opportunities in the field?
- If experience required, where would you suggest I start to obtain the necessary experience?
- Does additional education lead to greater opportunities?

3. What type of positions have you held prior to this?

4. What experience led you to your present employment?

5. What would you say is the greatest personal satisfaction connected with this occupation?

6. What is the greatest personal disappointment connected with the occupation?

7. What is a typical workweek for individuals in your position? For example Monday-Friday 8am-5pm.

8. What are the opportunities and limitations for advancement in your position?

9. Do you consider your position more physically or mentally demanding?

10. Could you share with me your feelings about the job outlook for your particular career field?

11. How does your current position meet the expectations you had prior to starting it?

12. What skills, abilities, aptitudes and or temperaments are needed to succeed in your industry?

13. Does your position serve values that are important to you?

14. How do you see your job changing over the next several years?

15. What is the approximate salary range for positions such as yours?

16. Does your firm provide on the job training?

17. What types of entry level jobs exist in this career field.

18. What “key or buzz words” are important to include in a cover letter or resume when job hunting in this field?

19. Which do you feel weighs more heavily in this position, education or experience?

20. What types of technology is used and at what level would an individual need to be competitive?
21. Does this position require the use of specialized software? If so, what software is commonly used within the industry.
22. What causes the greatest amount of stress within your industry?
23. Do you consider your job routine or highly repetitive?

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September 11, 2012

Mr. James Hire
Director of Human Resources
Pendleton Human Services Corporation
PO Box 5555555
Pendleton, OR 97801

Dr. Mr. Hire:

I am a student at Blue Mountain Community College. I am currently investigating careers to identify a career field to pursue as a profession. I am very interested in human services and would appreciate an opportunity to talk to you about the work you do.

I found the article about you in the East Oregonian on September 5, 2012 very interesting and would like to learn more about your field, I am confident you could provide me vital insight into your profession.

I will call you on Friday, September 21, 2012 to request an appointment. If possible I would like approximately one half hour of your time.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Janie Doe

Janie Doe

Janie Doe
1234 Pendleton Road
Pendleton OR 97801
(541)555-1234
jdoo@emailaddress.com

September 11, 2012

Ms. Caring
Case Manager
Pendleton Human Services Corporation
PO Box 555555
Pendleton, OR 97801

Dr. Ms. Caring:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on September 10, 2012. I enjoyed learning about your experiences in the human services industry. I value and appreciate the advice you offered me during our informational interview.

Your insight regarding being a case manager within the human services industry has helped me gain a better understanding of the education required to become competitive within the industry. I am now convinced that it is my calling to pursue a career within this industry.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Janie Doe

Janie Doe