

Informational interviewing is an effective and creative way to talk with people who work at a job or in a profession that may be of interest to you, to network and gather information about a specific career or company.

How can interviewing for information be helpful?

- Research career fields
- Research companies/organizations
- Build your network

What is an Informational Interview?

- Honest conversation with people currently working in a field or company that interests you
- Opportunity to gain a better understanding of the occupation or industry
- Occasion to build a network of contacts in that field or company
- NOT asking someone for a job

Who do you interview?

- Professionals in your field of interest
- Talk to everyone you know and tell them what kind of work interests you and that you are seeking to make contacts in the field
- Contacts made through professional organizations
- Read professional journals and newspapers to find potential contacts ([Orlando Business Journal](#): www.career.ucf.edu/UserFiles/UCFOBJDigitalSubscriptionSummary_1.pdf)
- Local Chamber of Commerce for employer listings

How do you arrange information interviews?

- After you find out the name and title of a person you would like to see, you can make initial contact via regular letter, email, or telephone
- Once you have reached them, introduce yourself and explain why the purpose of your call or letter. You might begin like this:

Student: "Good morning, Mr. Davidson, my name is _____, and I am currently a marketing student at the University of Central Florida. I received your name and number from my former supervisor, Carolyn Bivens. I imagine you are quite busy but I wondered if you may have just a moment to speak with me?"

Employer: "Yes, Carolyn and I used to work together at the American Heart Association. Sure thing, what can I do for you?"

Student: "Well, I'm very much interested in the field of marketing research. I have read a lot about this industry but feel I that I could benefit even more by talking to professionals who are in the field. The reason for my call is to ask if I would be able to conduct an informational interview with you? The interview would only take between 20-30 minutes. My schedule is flexible and I can meet with you at your convenience."

Important to Remember:

- The other person is doing you a favor, so it should be about what's convenient for them, not you.
- Follow his or her lead as to whether meetings will be in person or by phone

How do you prepare for informational interviews?

- Determine your dress
 - Dress in business or business casual attire
 - Clothes should be neat, pressed & appropriate for a chance meeting with the CEO
 - Avoid tight or baggy clothing
 - Never wear jeans, flip-flops, t-shirts, shorts or athletic shoes
- If meeting in person:
 - Make sure you have good directions and allow extra time for unforeseen circumstances to arrive a little early
 - Have contact number in case you need to call
- Develop a list of questions like:
 - Would you describe what you like most about your job and about this employer?
 - What do you dislike, or least enjoy?
 - What does a typical day look like for you?
 - What do you see as possible career paths leading to this job?
 - Are there particular values or personality characteristics that you think individuals in this job environment share?
 - What skills do you think one needs to do well in this job?
 - What is the salary range for someone entering the field?
 - What are the typical working conditions of this job? (workload, expectations, dress code, degree of independence, relationships, pressures, etc)
 - If you were going to hire a new entry level employee, what would a highly qualified candidate be like?
 - Is there something you would recommend I do to test whether this type of work is a good fit for me? (internships, co-op, or job shadowing opportunities).

Should you bring a resume?

- Make sure your resume has been critiqued and is finalized
- Bring a copy along with you to your meeting
- Provide a copy of your resume and request feedback and recommendations

How long does the interview last?

- Remember to keep your interview to approximately 30 minutes
- Be cognizant of time

What do you do afterward?

- Send a thank you letter to your contact
- Keep up positive ties! You never know when this contact might have a chance to suggest your name for a job vacancy
- Make sure to contact any additional people your original interviewee suggested to you
- As you progress in your job search and career, be sure to thank those that helped you along the way

Still not sure how to start?

- Check out one of the best Online Informational Interviewing Tutorials at http://www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html
- Visit UCF Career Services during walk-in hours, 10 am – 3 pm

Networking Tips

Networking:

- Is building alliances with people who may be able to assist with your job search
- Starts long before a job search
- Should prove to be your most effective job search strategy

Hidden Job Market:

- Approximately 80% of available job openings are filled through the hidden job market
- Job openings are not published in traditional outlets (Internet, newspaper), so fewer job seekers are aware of them
- Found through networking
- Less competition and rewards tend to be greater

Things to Remember about Networking:

- The goal of networking is to exchange ideas and information, not just ask for a job (it's a two-way street)
- Networking is a long-term relationship, not a one time contact
- Follow up after meeting good contacts (thank you note)
- Preparation is essential
- For networking functions *bring*: business cards, pen, resumes (in portfolio), calendar/planner and breath mints - *Leave behind* insecurities and any negativity

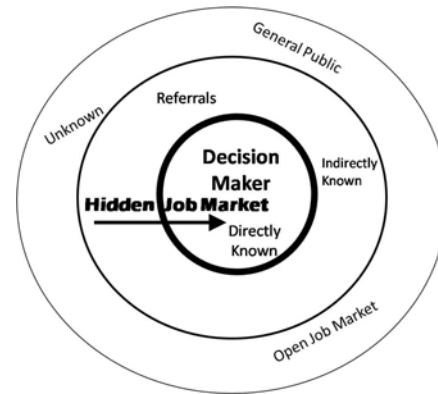
Who is in your network?

- Friends
- Family (immediate & distant relatives)
- Neighbors (current & past)
- Social acquaintances: golf, swim, tennis, social club members, PTA, sorority, fraternity
- Classmates (from any level of school)
- College alumni
- Co-workers & former co-workers
- Pastors/Ministers
- Members of your religious group
- Acquaintances (banker, lawyer, doctor, insurance agent)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Professional organization
- People you meet at conventions & conferences
- Speakers at meetings/classes you've attended
- Teachers/Professors/Instructors

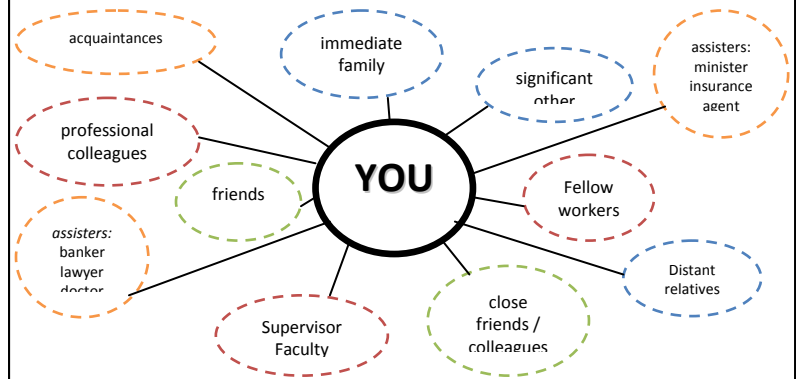
Strategies to network with Faculty:

- Visit regularly during office hours
- Attend departmental socials
- Volunteer or apply to work on a research project with faculty
- Write an article for publication and ask faculty to review and provide feedback
- Volunteer to sit on a department or university committee of students in your area of interest

Networking & the Hidden Job Market



Who is in Your Network?



Uncover New Contacts Through Known Contacts

