



Information Interviews

#1 CAREER ADVICE

Talking with a professional whose career interests you can be the most effective path to your dream job! Whether you are exploring or confirming a career change or actively job searching, Career Zen's best advice for clients is Information Interviews. It's worth it!

STEP 1: RESEARCH

Educate yourself about this career field using sites like O*NET and OOH. Learn what typical tasks and work environments are like. Keep in mind that what you read will be just 'the good.' You want a complete picture of this career so that you can make the best choices. That's why you talk with people in the know!

STEP 2: FIND PEOPLE

Start by asking your friends, family, and trusted colleagues if they know of people in the career fields you're interested in. Ask for an introduction. If not, search on LinkedIn and their alumni tool. Look for first and second-degree connections!

How to ask for an introduction: "Dear (your contact), I hope you're doing well! I'm in the process of exploring careers and am very interested in learning about (career field). I see that you're connected with (name @ company) on LinkedIn and wondered if you could offer an introduction. I'd like to learn more about their career path!"

WHY DO IT?

- ★ Learn 'the good, the bad, and the ugly' of the job.
- ★ Get insider information about this career field or company.
- ★ Determine if this would be a good fit (Great to know if not).
- ★ Build your network as these connections are key.



GET LIKED, GET HIRED

Companies hire people they like. A resume isn't likable. YOU are likable. Be seen and heard for the wonderful person you are!



Dos Equis Man

Treat your interviewee like the most interesting person in the world! Your fascination and sincere interest in their career story will help strengthen your connection and make you more likable! It's the likable person who gets the job. "Stay curious, my friends."



Collect Data

The more data points you collect, the more accurate of a portrait you'll get of a career. Don't limit yourself to just one interview per career. Set up several if possible!

STEP 3: SCHEDULE MEETINGS

Professionals are often busy people with full schedules and responsibilities. That said, they're also human and enjoy helping others when possible. They probably remember being unsure of their career at some point, and it's gratifying if their story can be helpful to someone else! Keep your requests simple, your questions short, and your gratitude ample. It doesn't take a lot of time to create a good connection.

How to set up a meeting: "Dear (name), I'm so glad that (contact) was able to connect us. I saw your profile on LinkedIn and am fascinated by your career path. I'm currently researching careers in (field) and eager to learn more about it! I'm contacting you not to ask for a job, but to gather more career information in order to make an informed decision. I'd love to hear about your work experiences and appreciate any wisdom to share. I would be happy to treat you to coffee or lunch, or schedule a 10-15 minute chat by phone or video. Thanks for your consideration."

*Do **not** ask for a job. The purpose is to connect and gather information. But sometimes jobs get offered when there's no pressure!*

Talk- don't use email. People are more candid when there's no paper trail. Depending on time, here are some possible formats:

- 10 minute phone call
- 15 minute video chat
- 30 minute coffee/tea (your treat)
- 1 hour lunch (your treat)



STEP 4: PREP

Ask good, smart questions! Take the research you've done online, couple it with your own self-reflection, and create a handful of questions to ask. Below are some examples to get you started:

- "How did you get started in this career?"
- "What does a typical work week look like?"
- "What's the most rewarding part of your job? The most challenging?"
- "How would you describe your company culture?"
- "What type of person is most successful in a career like this?"
- "What trends do you foresee in the next 5-10 years?"
- "What are some related professions that I should also consider?"
- "What do you know now that you wish you knew before you started?"
- "What advice do you have for me?"

Consider what answers would be most helpful to you in making your decisions. For instance, maybe you ask about working remotely or having a flexible schedule if that's priority for you. Or if you've got analysis paralysis, ask how they handled any fears about change.

STEP 5: THANK THEM

Take the time to thank your professionals for giving you invaluable insight into their career field. Send them a handwritten note, an email, or even a gift card (ex: \$10 Amazon). Let them know your takeaway from your conversation and offer to reciprocate any connections or assistance.

Stay in touch with them, as well. Connect with them on LinkedIn. Send them updates of your career exploration, and remind them how helpful they've been to your career decision process!

My Information Interview Questions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Let Career Zen guide you along your journey: career-zen.com

