How to Conduct An Informational Interview

The information interview is a technique for finding out information about jobs and for making contacts. You can find out a lot by reading and researching occupations, but the best information comes from talking to people. This is your opportunity to really find out the real “scoop” from an expert!

Here’s how it works:

1. **FIRST**, find someone to contact. It could be any person working in the field in which you’re interested. Sources to find people include:
   - Your Facebook Account
   - LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com)
   - Friends and family members
   - Professors
   - The Internet
   - Professional Associations related to your occupation. Here are some sources for finding a professional association:
     1. For a list of associations, try looking at [www.cacareercafe.com](http://www.cacareercafe.com) for associations related to your occupation/major
        Directions:  click on “Get Experience” then click on “Make a Connection with a Professional Association” then click on “Professional Association Database” then pick an industry. Often association websites will list email addresses of current members who you could try contacting.
     2. Google.com is the other source of finding an association type in career title, professional association, and city for example “nursing professional association Los Angeles”. You will most likely find the local chapter of a national organization.

2. **SECOND**, contact this person, introduce yourself “Hi Mr. Smith, my name is Jane Blane and I am a student at Santa Monica College. I am very interested in finding out more about the field of ice-cream making. I wonder if I could speak with you for about 15 minutes and ask you a few questions. Would it be possible for me to speak with you on the phone or meet with you in person regarding how to become a professional ice-cream maker?”
3. **THIRD**, make a list of questions you’d like to ask them about their profession. For the purposes of this assignment, you must ask the person whom you are interviewing at least 5 questions.

   **Sample questions include the following:**

   - Do you have a college degree? Where did you go to school and what did you major in?
   - What do you like/best worst about your job/work?
   - What educational background is necessary for this job?
   - What are the steps necessary to break into this field?
   - What made you decide to pursue this profession?
   - What is a typical day like for you?
   - What are important skills needed for this job?
   - What is the salary range for this occupation? What might I expect to earn in an entry level position in this career?
   - What are some related occupations to your profession?
   - What books/journals/associations would you suggest I explore for further information?
   - **DO NOT** ask the person how much they specifically make.

4. **FOURTH**, ask for their business card or contact information and send them a **THANK YOU NOTE** to thank them for their time within 24 hours. This can either be via email or US mail. Please do not text a thank you note.