

## What Do I Do Afterwards?

First, gather your notes. Expand on them if necessary to help you remember your interviewee's responses. Take some time to jot down what thoughts you had after the interview.

Second, process the information gathered. Have your thoughts or expectations about a career field changed? Do you have any follow up items (books to read, people to contact, etc.) to complete?

Third, send a thank you note! Always, always send a thank you to each interviewee within one week of the interview. A short and simple "thank you" is the appropriate thing to do to express your gratitude for the time taken to speak with you.

## Other Helpful Hints

- ❖ If you ask for 20-30 minutes, stick to that timeframe.
- ❖ Certainly come prepared with a list of questions, but be flexible to allow for the interview to flow. Your interviewee may provide you with information far beyond what you had expected if you don't feel pressed to get all 15 (or whatever) questions on your list covered.
- ❖ Always be sure to ask your interviewee's perspective on what qualifications are necessary to move into their job field.

## Useful Resources

Check out these web sites for further tips:

[http://www.quintcareers.com/informational\\_interviewing.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing.html)

<http://danenet.wicip.org/jets/jet-9407-p.html>

<http://interview.netscape.monster.com/rehearsal/informational/>

For further information about informational interviewing or career development, contact Erin Hutchinson at extension 4617.



# Informational Interviewing

Your Guide to Gathering the  
Information You Need to  
Make Informed Career Decisions

NUMMI's Career Guidebook Series: # 1

## What is Informational Interviewing?

Informational interviewing is a method of gathering information about job functions and or/career fields from individuals who currently work in the areas of interest to you.

Informational interviewing is, just as it sounds, the process of interviewing people to gather information about what their work life is like.

## What's it For?

In order to make informed career decisions, it is important to gather as much information about any career fields that are of interest to you.

Informational interviews can be an extremely valuable way of gathering information about a new career field before you commit to making the change.

Informational interviews are also a good method for increasing your network, identifying the skills and experiences necessary to be successful within a particular field, and even improve your job interview confidence and abilities.



## How do I Prepare?

Certainly your first step is to identify the career areas/fields about which you are curious. Are you interested in a different department within NUMMI? A different job function? A new career field entirely? In order to conduct effective interviews, you must first be clear on what information you are trying to gather.

Once you know what information you wish to acquire, the next step is finding out who can provide you with it. In this case, you need to find a list of contacts that either currently work in the career field that interests you, or may know someone who does.

Think of everyone that you know – friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, etc. If none of your contacts work in the field you're investigating, ask each of them if they know someone who does. Most likely, you'll come up with a list of a few people who you can contact for interviews. Certainly you'll have no problem finding a good number of names here at NUMMI.

## How Do I Get Interviews Set Up?

This is usually the hardest part of the process. Many people feel that asking someone to meet with them to provide information about their job is pushy. However, most people are more than happy to take a few minutes to talk about their work life and experiences. And remember, the worst thing that can happen is someone tells you they can't, won't or don't have time to speak with you.

You can approach requesting the interviews by:

- ❖ Sending a letter/email briefly stating who you are and what you wish to speak with them about. Let them know that you'd like 20-30 minutes of their time to interview them about their current position/career field.
- ❖ Calling them directly to provide the same information over the phone.
- ❖ Ask the person who provided you with the potential interview subject to arrange an interview for you.

## What Should I Ask?

Always come to each interview with a list of questions you wish to ask. The exact questions will vary depending upon the nature of each interview. Some example questions you might wish to ask are:

- ❖ On a typical day, what do you do?
- ❖ What kinds of decisions do you make?
- ❖ What percentage of your time is spent doing what?
- ❖ What training, education, work experience is required for this type of work?
- ❖ What do you most enjoy about your job? Least enjoy?
- ❖ What surprised you the most about this job?
- ❖ How did you get your job? What jobs and experiences led you here?
- ❖ What personal qualities or attitudes are important to being successful in this job?
- ❖ Can you recommend any journals, books or web sites I could review to find out more about this field?
- ❖ Based on my experience, how would you recommend I approach moving into this field?

