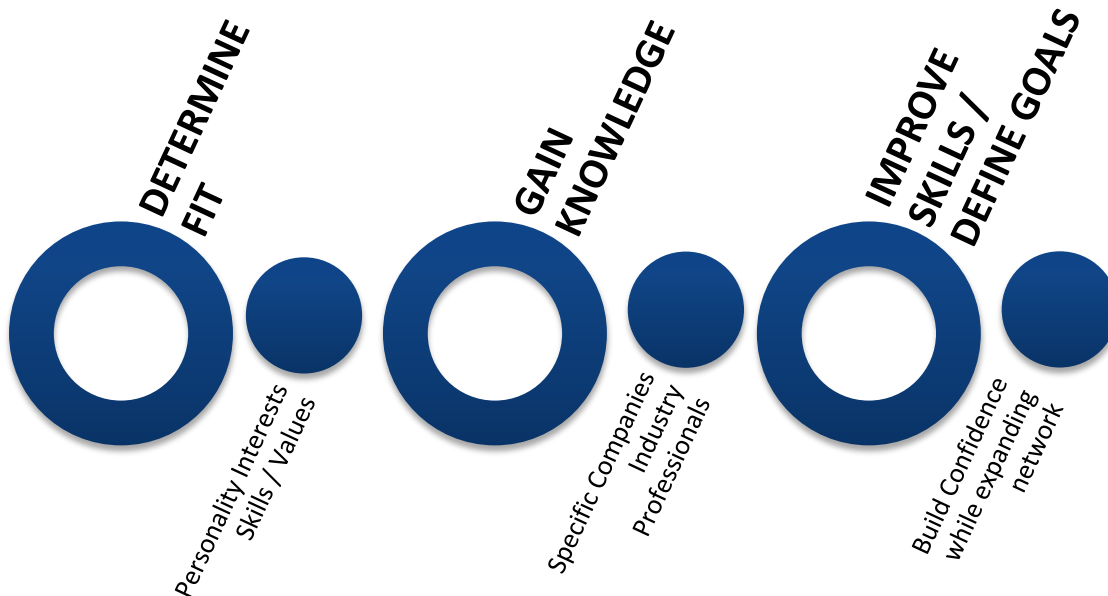


Informational Interview Success

A good way to gain insight about a desired career field is by conducting an informational interview. An informational interview is a networking opportunity that YOU initiate!

The purpose is to obtain information, not to ask for a job.

WHY CONDUCT AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW?



ACTION PLAN FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW SUCCESS

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD YOU ASK?



Ask questions that will elicit the information you need. Carefully-worded questions can generate thoughtful responses. You can select from the questions below, but be sure to conduct your own research so that you may be able to ask more in-depth questions.

Career Environment

- How would you outline or describe a typical day? Such as your routine duties or tasks you perform?
- How much flexibility are you allowed in your position in terms of dress, hours, vacation, job-location, etc?
- What portion of your position involves interacting with others, such as co-workers and/or the public?
- What types of training does your company offer to individuals?
- From your perspective, what are the problems/challenges of working in this field?

Career Requirements and Experiences

- What college courses that you took were most helpful to you in your current position/career?
- What training or education is required for this type of work?
- Is special certification, licensing, or an advanced degree required for your job? If so, what?
- Describe the types of jobs or positions you have had and skills you have developed in them?
- What do you think of the experience I've had so far in terms of entering this field?

Personal Views

- What was your undergraduate major field of study? Were you always interested in this field?
- Did you have any practical experiences or training other than college, prior to your current role?
- What personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this/your career?
- What part of this job do you find most satisfying? Most challenging?
- How did you get your job?

Outlook

- What are the opportunities for advancement in this field?
- What are the current and future demands for people in this career?
- How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?

Advice

- What special advice would you give a person for entering this field?
- What other fields or related careers would you recommend I research further?
- Are there any professional groups that would be beneficial?
- Do you have any recommendations of blogs, websites, or other resources I could use to gain more information about this industry or position?
- Do you know of any other people in this field who might be willing to talk to me about their experiences? Do you mind if I used your name when I contact them?
- How can I get experience in this field while I am still in college?
- If I concluded that this was the career I wished to pursue, what would you say are the most important things I must do to have the best possible chance of breaking into this field?

Recap: Make adjustments to your career objective or resume if necessary. Document the following:

<p>Date of Interview: _____</p> <p>Interviewee: _____</p> <p>Career Title: _____</p> <p>Organization Name: _____</p>	<p>What did you learn from experience?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Would you pursue this career?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
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Sample Emails for Requesting an Informational Interview

A good way to gain insight about a desired career field is by conducting an informational interview. An informational interview is a **NETWORKING** opportunity that **YOU** initiate!

The following sample emails are provided to guide you as you develop your own personalized and thoughtful outreach to a potential contact.

Here is an example for reaching out to a “strong tie.” As you can see there is more familiarity in the language, while still being professional. Make sure to include:

- What you want or hope to learn from them.
- What their commitment would be.

Dear Michael,

I enjoyed meeting with you earlier this spring. I really appreciated you taking the time to have coffee with me and catching up on our families and your news. The more I heard about your personal and professional experiences, the greater my interest was piqued in advertising.

After reading the book you recommended, Advertising: a Career Guide, I gained a clearer understanding of the industry. Based on our conversation and the research I have done since then, I am now planning on majoring in Advertising at SMU and would appreciate some input on good next steps.

Perhaps we can schedule a brief meeting (apx. 30 minutes) where I can gather some information on valuable internship experiences, and which skills you think would be most helpful to acquire as I navigate the transition in to advertising from general business.

Thanks again for your time and assistance. You have been an inspiration. I will be in touch by phone or email within the next two weeks to follow up.

Sincerely,

Jen Adams
214-444-4444

Here is an example for reaching out to a “weak tie.” Make sure to include:

- Where you found their information or who referred you to them.
- Why should they care: Who you are, any connections, the result of the meeting, etc.
- What you want or hope to learn from them.
- What their commitment would be.

Subject: SMU Student Seeking Career Advice

Dear Ms. Johnson,

I found your name through the SMU Alumni and Hegi Career Center group on LinkedIn. As a sophomore at Southern Methodist University, I am majoring in Markets and Culture with a minor in Communications. After graduation I am interested in pursuing a career within the financial sector, particularly in commercial banking. I would appreciate the opportunity to spend about 30 minutes with you on the phone or in person to learn from your expertise in the area of commercial banking. Topics to discuss may include learning about your career path and what skills and experience I might need to gain during my remaining years at SMU.

I am typically available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 2:00 and 6:00 pm and on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9:30 am and 12:00 pm. Please let me know if there is a time that fits your schedule. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Trigg

214-444-4445

Here is another example for reaching out to a “weak tie.” Make sure to include:

- Where you found their information or who referred you to them.
- Why should they care: Who you are, any connections, the result of the meeting, etc.
- What you want or hope to learn from them.
- What their commitment would be.

Subject: SMU Student Seeking Career Advice

Dear Mr. Hart,

I hope you will be able to help me in my exploration of a sporting career. I am a sophomore majoring in Business at Southern Methodist University. Working as a Mustang Host these past few months, I have seen you at many of the sporting events on campus. Thank you for your hard work within SMU Athletics.

Careers in sports have interested me for a while now. Working with SMU Athletics as a host, I truly enjoy being on the customer service side of the business. Making a patron feel both welcomed and valued is quite fulfilling, and something I want as a part of my career. Looking forward, I believe I would grow by learning from your experiences and perspective.

Would it be possible to join you for a quick coffee/meeting? I imagine that the Directorship keeps you busy, and would appreciate even 20-30 minutes of your time. As a student at SMU, I would be happy to meet at a time and place convenient for you.

Kindest regards,
Jan Ford
214-800-1500