

## Suggested Informational Interview Process

Make a phone call to the HR department at a company where you'd like to work. Ask for the opportunity to come in and conduct a 15 minute informational interview to learn more about their company. Explain that you are a job seeker and that in your research, their company is one you really want to work with. If you get a "yes" then set a time and date and be sure you mark it down. Also, note the name and telephone number of the person you're going to meet. If you have an emergency and have to change the appointment, you will want to call that person as *early as possible*. Remember, granting an information interview is a favour. It is most appropriate to act as though you would if you were a guest invited to someone's home.

### Preparations

Be certain to treat this like a professional interview! Dress as if a job depended on your appearance. Arrive early and have a note pad and a personal business card ready to hand to the person you are meeting. Greet the receptionist with a big smile, give your full name, and note their name on your note pad so you can thank them by name on the way out.

### Introductions

When the person comes out to greet you, smile, shake hands and introduce yourself by name. Hand the person your personal business card. Thank them for taking the time to meet with you. Remember that you are there to learn more about the company and to make a personal connection so start off with telling the person briefly about why you are there and what you hope to learn.

### Questions to ask about the person:

1. What is your job title?
2. What are the duties, functions, and responsibilities of your job?
3. What were the steps along your career path? What jobs and experiences led you to your present position?
4. What things do you think were most important in your career advancement?

### Questions to ask about the company:

1. How is this company different from the competition?
2. Has this company made any recent improvements to upgrade its business practices and profitability?
3. What can you tell me about the culture in this company?
4. What work-related values are most highly prized in this company?
5. What are the customary entry-level job titles and functions?
6. Does the company offer Internships or Learnerships?
7. What is the typical job-interview process at the company? How many interviews do candidates usually have before being offered a position?
8. Why did you decide to work for this company?
9. What do you like most about working here?

### Questions to ask about the industry:

1. Can you estimate future job opportunities in this industry?
2. What are the problems you observe regarding working in this career?
3. When people leave this career, what are the usual reasons?
4. How is the economy impacting this industry?

You may not have time for all of these questions in your interview. It will depend on how much time the person has allocated to you. You need to pay attention to the time and even if the conversation is lively, at the end of the arranged for time you need to ask the person if they need to get back to their job. If they say no, then by all means stay on to finish your interview.

Be sure to ask for a business card of the person you're interviewing. Also be certain to thank them at the conclusion of the interview with a handshake and big smile. Also thank the receptionist by name on your way out. Always send a thank you card or email to the person who gave you the interview and remind them you hope to work with them one day in their company.