

# Networking in Your Industry

## Informational Interviews

An informational interview is an informal conversation you have with a professional in an area of interest to you. It is an effective research tool and is best done after preliminary online research. The objective of an informational interview is to create a networking relationship and seek insight from an experienced professional; informational interviews are not used to find a job.

The key to networking today is being intentional. Intentional networking helps foster one of the foundational and long-standing elements of networking, trust. According to Reid Hoffman, Co-Founder of LinkedIn, “Your network is the people who want to help you – and who you want to help.” In today’s hyper-social virtual world, people connecting and helping one another on sites such as LinkedIn or Cane2Cane has allowed the transfer of trust virtually and systematically, without need for proximity.

This guide will lead you through the process of an informational interview from the start of the meeting. To learn how to reach out to a professional within or outside of your network view our [outreach resource](#).

### Introduction

Whether your meeting in-person or virtually, kicking-off the conversation can be intimidating. Try a few of these opening questions. Below each question are notes

1. How's your day going so far?
  - ⌘ Assess the demeanor
  - ⌘ Demonstrate active listening
2. What projects are you working on right now?
  - ⌘ Gauge passion
  - ⌘ Demonstrate interest in the type of work
3. Can you tell me about your background and how you came to work for insert employer?
  - ⌘ Demonstrate personal/professional interest
  - ⌘ Develop an understanding of career happenstance within career paths

### Core Conversation

The core of the conversation should include trends, insights, advice, resources, and assignments (TIARA). Using the TIARA method, helps you stay on track with the information most helpful.

1. Trends (T)
  - ⌘ Think big picture and open-ended questions (not yes/no questions) on your industry
  - ⌘ Show intention, passion for the industry and build likeability
  - ⌘ Example: What trends are impacting the industry (growth, change, opportunity) right now?
  - ⌘ Example: What trends do you see in the application process – resume or interview process.
  - ⌘ Example: What skills and qualifications are industry standards?
    - i. Follow-up: What skills have you've adapted and used to your advantage?

## 2. Insight (I)

- Insight questions are based 100% on your goals. You have a leader in the field's attention, what do you want to know?
- Be intentional. What are your goals? What information will be helpful in creating an action plan to achieve those goals?
- Example: what's been your biggest aha moment?
- Example: What surprises you most about your job/your employer?
- Example: What's the best lesson you've learned on the job?
- Example: What's been your most valuable experience at your employer so far, and why?

## 3. Advice

- Like insights, the advice section is when you directly ask intentional questions for feedback on how to obtain your career goals.
- Example: What can I be doing right now to prepare myself for a career in this field?
- Example: If I got hired, what should I be sure to do within the first 30 days?
- Example: How do you suggest reaching out to HR regarding a job posting?
- Example: In your opinion, how can I maximize my chance of breaking into this industry or role?

## 4. Resources

- Ask for resources, not referrals.
- Example: What resources do you recommend?
- Example: What LinkedIn groups do you find helpful?
- Example: How do you stay up to date in the industry?
- Example: What next steps would you recommend for me?

## 5. Assignments

- In today's job market, hiring managers are using skill-based hiring. Skills-based hiring emphasizes and prioritizes practical and working knowledge for employees.
- Seek to understand the skillsets required for the industry or role.
- Example: What are the three most important skills that make someone successful in this role?
- Example: What project(s) have you done that you felt added the most value?
- Example: What are your key performance indicators (KPIs)?
- Example: What is a typical workday or week for you?

At the end of the meeting set up an action plan

- Can I follow back up next week?
- I'll update you on the progress of my job search.
- What can I do next?
- Would you mind if we kept in contact? I'd love to check in monthly.
- Keep me updated on your project, I would love to hear how it turns out.
- Can you send me a copy of the presentation you did at the conference? I would love to read it.

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