Bozeman Health

Career Blueprint

Informational Interviews

Bozeman Health
Center for Education + Development

Informational Interviews

Review the corresponding module(s) for this topic on the Bozeman On Demand Career Portal prior to completing this section.

Informational interviews are beneficial methods to obtain more information about different roles in your organization, fields you might be interested in, and the career paths of your colleagues. Through these conversations, you can (hopefully) discover what a person's job is like, what they do, and what responsibilities they have.

Benefits of Informational Interviewing

- Expand your professional network

- Get firsthand, relevant information about the realities of working within a field, industry or position.

- Clarify your career goals.

- Learn the skills needed for particular roles.

- Learn about others' career paths to help you decide on your own path

Best Practices for Informational Interviews

✓ Before the Interview…

- ➢ **Make of list of who you want to interview.** And, do your research. Find out a little about their background prior to the interview.

- ➢ **Make a clear request of what you are seeking from them.** Follow the scripting h**ere** for an example of verbiage you can use to request an interview.

- ➢ **Identify your goal for each meeting.** No two interviews will be the same. Know what you want to obtain from each person and have a strategy to get that.

- ➢ **Prepare a list of questions for each interview.** These should align to your goals. Select key questions you will ask your interviewee.

- ➢ **Organize your questions.** Create a few categories for your questions so you ensure you have a diverse set of questions you will be asking. For instance, you probably don't want to ask questions only about their background, you may also want to learn about their role and the industry.

Requesting the interview:

My name is [NAME] and I'm reaching out today because I'd like to learn more about your [WORK, CAREER, PROJECTS]. Would you be willing to connect for a 20-minute conversation to discuss your career so far and some insight into your industry/field?

If you're open to this idea, I'm available to meet at the following times in the next two weeks: [PROVIDE A LIST OF OPTIONS]

Please let me know if one of those dates and times work for you and I will send over a calendar invite.

Thank you,

✓ ... During the Interview...

➢ **Start slowly and personally.** Don't just start with a deluge of questions, share a little about yourself to break the ice.

➢ **Help the interviewee open up.** It's not easy to talk about ourselves. Help your interviewee with open ended questions about their career background to get them started.

Questions to help open the interview:

- How did you get started in this field?
- Tell me about your career background
- What are some of the projects you are currently working on?

➢ **Take control of the meeting.** You are there to interview not to have the person being interviewed lead the meeting. Walking into the meeting with this mindset will help you have a successful interview.

➢ **Be prepared to talk about yourself.** Have a short introduction prepared highlighting your career goals and focuses.

20-minute blueprint for a great interview

Here's a guideline to have a well-planned 20-minute interview.

Time	Detail
1 minute	Greet your interviewee and thank them for their time
3 minutes	Tell your story ✓ Who you are, your background and a few of your career goals
15 minutes	Have a great conversation using the "questions to get you started" on the next page ✓ Make sure you are getting the information you need to achieve the goals you for this meeting
1 minute	Wrap-up and thank-you Ask for recommendations of others who you could talk with

Questions to get you started

Here is a list of questions you can use in your interview regardless of their role. To get the most of the interview, do a little background on the person you are speaking with so your questions can be more pointed. Because you've only got a few minutes, you may want to **rank your questions** to make sure you get to the ones you really want.

Understand their background

- How did you end up/why did you choose this particular career?
- Can you tell me a bit about your career path and what led you to the role you're in today?
- What positions did you hold prior to your current job?
- How did you become interested in this field?
- How did you begin your career?
- If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself? If not, what would you change?
- What were some of your early roles in the field?

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Understand their role

- What is a typical day (or week) like for you?
- What are your main responsibilities as a...?
- What do you like most about your work?
- What do you like least about your work?
- What kinds of problems do you deal with?
- What kinds of decisions do you make?
- What are some big projects you are working on now?

Understand more about the industry/field

- How does your position fit within the organization/career field/industry?
- What current issues and trends in the field should I know about/be aware of?
- Is this a rapidly growing field? Is it possible to predict future needs for workers in this field?
- Is this a growing or shrinking industry? In what ways?

For your Career Development

- What kind of education, training, or background does your job require?
- What skills, abilities, and personal attributes are essential to success in your job/this field?
- What are some common career paths in this field?
- Do you know of any professional organizations or networking events I should join or attend?
- Can you recommend trade journals, magazines or professional associations which would be helpful for my professional development?
- Do you have any recommendations for other people I should talk to or other resources I should explore?

Action Plan

#1

Identify 3-5 individuals who you would like to interview and what information you hope to obtain from them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

#2

Create your own questions **FOR EACH** that you think would be ideal for the informational interviews you will be conducting.

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