Presenter Background

Neilye Garrity, Co-founder of CandidCareer.com

- Pennsylvania State University
  - 2004 Bachelor of Science in Information Sciences and Technology
  - Lettered 4 years in field hockey and served as team captain
- Work Experience
  - Information Technology Consultant for IBM (2004 -2010)
    - Focused on software development, training and project management
- Interesting Facts
  - Completed 2010 Ironman competition in Coeur D’Alene, Idaho
  - High School Field Hockey Coach
  - Two sons (3 months old and 2.5 years old)
Candid Career is the premier provider of informational video interviews featuring industry professionals from various industries giving candid career advice, including job descriptions, career preparation tips and personal testimonials.
What is an Informational Interview?

• An Informational Interview or Informational Conversation is a meeting in which a career explorer or potential job seeker gets advice on a career, industry, and/or company culture.

• The interviewee (industry professional) learns about the career explorer or job seeker and can make notes on their potential as a future hire at their company.

• This is **NOT** a job interview. It is not about hiring and not about a specific job. The interviewee asks general questions about careers at the company and in the industry.
Purpose of an Informational Interview

- Learn about a potential career path
- Learn about the expectations and preferences of employers in a particular industry or company
- Identify gaps in your education, background, experience, or training
- Fine-tune your college major and career plans
Why is it Important?

- Career Exploration & Networking Tool
- You learn something
- You get help
- You find a mentor

Video – Why Career Exploration?

Video – Why Network?
How to find people?

• Use your Network!
  • LinkedIn
  • Family and Friends

• Your college may provide tools to help students connect with alumni through a mentorship program or other networking tool
  • Career Services Office
  • Alumni Association
Scheduling an Appointment

• When making appointments, tell your contacts how you got their names and why you hope they will talk to you.

• Ask for a time that works for the other person NOT you. They are doing you a favor.
  • Treat them with respect and work around their schedule to the best of your ability.
  • A 20-minute phone call or a 30-minute meeting is a reasonable request.

• Decide Location
  • Phone, email or in person.
  • Face-to-face interviews are by far the most valuable and effective but not always possible.
Preparing for the Interview (1/2)

• Do your homework. Try to find out a bit about the person you are meeting.
  • LinkedIn Profile, Facebook, Twitter, etc
  • Similar Connections/Friends?
• Occupational Outlook Handbook
  • http://www.bls.gov/ooh/
• ONET
  • http://www.onetonline.org/

• Research what is going on in his or her company or industry.
  • Set up a Google News Alert

• Don’t expect the other person to set the agenda of the meeting. You set the agenda!
Preparing for the Interview (2/2)

• **Do** decide if and how you will record information
• **Do** plan to dress for success
• **Do** send a résumé in advance
• **Do** practice with a friend or family member if you're not an experienced interviewer or your nervous
• **Do** call or email to confirm your appointment
• **Do** prepare a list of questions

• **Don't** go into the interview thinking this is a job interview. You are **NOT** there to ask for a job!
During the Interview

- **Do** arrive on time.

- **Do** absorb your surroundings; listen carefully.
  - **Don’t** argue with the answers you hear.

- **Do** project enthusiasm and show your personality.
  - **Do** give a brief introduction about yourself (career, hobbies/interests, etc.)

- **Do** end the interview when you promised to.

- **Do** ask if you can stay in contact. Trade business cards.

- **Do** ask for referrals.

- **Do** thank the interviewee (and **do** so again later in writing).
Example Questions (1/2)

• **Questions for anyone**
  • Can you tell me how you got this position?
  • What do you like MOST about what you do? What are some of the CHALLENGES?
  • What are your educational and career backgrounds? What would you do differently if you were starting over?

• **Questions for learning about a Career**
  • What is a typical day like for you?
  • Why do you think you have been successful in this field?
  • What advice do you have for someone considering this field as a career direction?

• **Questions for learning about an Industry**
  • What are the types of jobs that exist where you work and in the industry in general?
  • What does a typical career path look like for someone in your industry?
  • Are there any trade and professional associations I should consider? LinkedIn groups?
  • How do you see your industry changing in the next 10 years?
Example Questions (2/2)

• **Questions for job seekers:**
  • How did you break into this field? What is your story?
  • What are the biggest challenges facing your company and your industry today?
  • What types of skills / knowledge are going to be needed to address these?
  • What weaknesses in a person’s skill set would make him or her ineffective in this business?
  • What are the most valuable skills in your job? Which experiences enabled you to develop these skills?
  • How do you keep skills current? What do you read? What professional associations do you belong to? What seminars or continuing education do you consider useful?
  • If you were in the job market tomorrow, what would you do?

• **Questions About You**
  • What kind of job responsibilities could I expect with my degree level in your Industry?
  • What strengths and weaknesses do you see in my current background?
  • Is there anything else you think would be helpful as I consider this field?
  • Looking at my résumé, what advice would you have for me on next steps if I were interested in this industry/company/career?

• **More Sample Questions**
  • http://www.quintcareers.com/information_interview.html
Informational Interview - Example

Video – Environmental Scientist Job Description
After the Meeting

• Write a thank you note

• Connect via LinkedIn

• Follow-up
  • Keep the person posted on your progress
  • As soon as you decide on your next steps or take a new job let your network know.
Creative Ways to Stay in Touch

• During the interview find out something you have in common.
  • Hobby, Favorite Sports Team, etc

• If they referred you to someone else. Keep them posted on your meeting with that person and thank them for connecting you.

• Google News Alert on their industry/company
Informational Interview - Video Recap

Video – Informational Interview Recap