

November 2022



How an Informational Interview Can Lead to Your Next Job

Are you thinking about working in a specific occupation, field or industry but are not quite sure if it would be a good fit for you? Are you wondering what it's *really* like to work in that job? Have you done some online research, yet still have questions? One way to gain some insight and find some answers is by doing an **informational interview** i.e., by talking with someone who is *already working* in the area you are considering.

An informational interview is NOT the same as a job interview. Instead, it is merely a way to gather information and build a professional relationship with someone in your field of interest. It is a brief conversation in which YOU get to ask someone the questions that your online research didn't answer – e.g., what their job, company or industry is like,

what their responsibilities and challenges are, what a typical day is like, what type of people tend to do well in their job, what advice they have for someone who wants to enter the field, etc.

In short, an informational interview gives you the opportunity to:

- ◆ Gain an inside perspective on a specific occupation, field or industry
- ◆ Expand your network by meeting with someone in your field of interest
- ◆ Practice and build your interviewing skills
- ◆ Learn about job leads and/or networking opportunities



There are several ways you can arrange an informational interview, but all of them involve reaching out to someone to request about 15-20 minutes of their time to discuss their work. It is easiest to start with people you already know or have a mutual friend or acquaintance refer you, but you can also contact people directly via LinkedIn or other social media apps. Reaching out to individuals you may have met at networking events or job fairs is another option.

If you have concerns about reaching out to people, especially those you don't already know, keep in mind that most individuals like to talk about themselves and are happy to share their experience and advice with others. Usually, all you need to do is ask.

To learn more visit Indeed for [A Complete Guide To Informational Interviews](#)

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“The world needs dreamers and the world needs doers. But above all, the world needs dreamers who do.”

- Sarah Ban Breathnach



An “Informational Interview” Success Story

Out of the workforce since 2009 while raising her three children, Eve came to The Women’s Center when she filed for divorce and realized her financial situation was about to change drastically. Af-



Photo by: Penelope Peralta

ter previously working in the fields of fashion and education, Eve was unsure about a new career direction. She enrolled in TWC’s *Career Launch 101* program this past spring where she took an interest inventory that suggested careers based on her personality and strengths. When Eve saw “flight attendant” it struck a chord with her: this was a career where she could use her language skills and it played to her interests of learning about new cultures, meeting new people and working in a fast-paced environment where every day is a bit different. But she didn’t know much about being a flight attendant, so Eve immediately set out to learn more about it.

Eve told us: “First, I coincidentally happened to be flying shortly after I began to consider this occupation, and so I approached three flight attendants in the galley of the American Airlines plane that I was on [and expressed my interest in learning more about the field]. I am still in contact with one of these flight attendants. He is a great resource for answering general questions and was the one who inspired me to actually submit my resume when I was dragging my feet. He also recommended me internally.”

“I also asked at my exercise studio if any other members work in the aviation industry. I immediately lucked out. A woman who was slated to attend that very same class with me is an international purser (cabin crew leader) for United Airlines! The woman at the front desk introduced us and we went out for coffee that same morning. After speaking with me, the woman from United also ended up giving me an internal recommendation.”

When asked, *What advice would you have for others who might be hesitant to ask people for help with their job search?* Eve replied, “It’s worth it to put yourself out there -- even if you’re not an outgoing person -- because when a stranger says no or if a situation doesn’t work out as planned, you’re in no worse position than if you hadn’t tried in the first place.”

These “informational interviews” enabled Eve to learn about the job from people who were already in the field, and what to expect during the hiring process, including typical interview questions. Her new contacts made internal recommendations, helping Eve land interviews with two major airlines, resulting in a job offer with United Airlines! By asking for help, Eve turned conversations into relationships – adding industry contacts to her “job search network”. Eve says, “I’m not sure if I would have been called to interview had it not been for networking.” We wish Eve all the best as she starts her training with United Airlines this month!



6 Benefits of Seasonal Jobs by Adrienne Bibby

www.flexjobs.com

A seasonal job is similar to a temporary job in that it’s short-term and has a specific end date. When it comes to seasonal jobs, “season” doesn’t have anything to do with the weather. For example, some accountants are seasonal workers with their “season” being January through April. Retail’s “season” is over the winter holidays, but their seasonal hiring starts as early as October. Season, in this case, means an industry’s busy season when companies need extra help.

1. It’s a Resume Builder (and Gap Filler)

If you don’t have any work history, a seasonal job is the perfect opportunity for you to start gaining some. Seasonal jobs are also a great way to fill in gaps on your resume or get extra experience whether it be in your existing career field or in a new one.

2. Helps You Gain Experience

In addition to helping build the work history section on your resume, seasonal jobs can help

you build the skills section. Even if you only worked for three months, you probably learned and used a number of skills. While you likely acquired some hard skills, there’s a good chance that you also developed your soft skills. Add these to your resume to help you stand out.

3. Gets Your Foot in the Door

Seasonal jobs can help you get your foot in the door at a particular company. While there are no guarantees, if you’re available

6 Benefits of Seasonal Jobs Continued

to work when the job is over, the employer may be willing to continue your seasonal employment after the regular season ends.

Even if the seasonal job doesn't lead to long-term employment at that company, by making new contacts, you're expanding your network and increasing your chances of finding a job that isn't seasonal somewhere else. If nothing else, your boss may be willing to act as a reference when you need one or could connect you to people who are hiring non-seasonal employees.

4. You Can Test Drive a New Job (or Career)

An overlooked benefit of seasonal work is that it lets you test drive a new job or career field without fully committing. For example, say you always dreamed of being a teacher. Working as a camp counselor could be the ideal seasonal job for you to try out working with kids while getting paid.

By the end of camp, if you figured out you love working with children, you may have a clearer path to become a teacher. But, if it turns out you don't love it as

much as you thought you would, you've likely got plenty of time to rethink your career plans.

5. Offers Flexible Schedules

In some cases, seasonal jobs are also the perfect flexible schedule jobs. Retail roles are a great example. During the busy shopping season, stores, delivery companies, and fulfillment centers often extend their hours. This gives you the opportunity to work early morning or late night hours if that type of schedule suits you.

6. Gives You Extra Money (and Maybe Discounts)

Finally, seasonal jobs are great sources of income. Whether it's something to supplement your regular job or money you earn over the summer before going back to school, seasonal jobs are the perfect way to earn some cash in a short amount of time.

And don't forget about the discounts! Many seasonal employers offer employee discounts to seasonal workers. So you might enjoy discounted lift tickets, admission to events, deals on apparel, and more.

Find Your Season

Seasonal jobs may not work for every job seeker. However, depending on the job search "season" you're in, a seasonal role may be the right opportunity for you. It can help you gain new skills, test out a new career, and possibly even lead to full-time permanent employment.

Find your new seasonal role on FlexJobs. Head to the Advanced Search page and type "seasonal" in the keyword field. You'll find seasonal roles in industries and at companies you may have never thought would hire seasonal help!

Companies That Hire for Remote Seasonal and Holiday Jobs
<https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/companies-hire-remote-holiday-jobs-v2/>



Extraordinary Times Call for Extraordinary Measures

Mary Ellen Zung, Health Coach - <https://maryellenzung.com/>

We are living in extraordinary times. Our day to day challenges in this current climate may be causing negative thoughts and feelings of overwhelm, anxiety, fear, uncertainty, or other strong emotions. As a result, we might notice behavioral changes such as overreaction to minor things, overindulging behaviors, aggression, or changes in sleep, for example.

We know good health has everything to do with good nutrition, physical activity, and proper sleep. But just as important to good health are our thoughts, feelings and emotions. Many of us are numb to our feelings, and "pent up" or "pushed down" emotions if not dealt with, can result in actual physical dis-ease in the body. Many of us are so busy, or concerned with other distractions in

our lives that we are not even aware of our thoughts and emotions.

One way to tap into our negative thoughts, be more present, and release the negative privately is through Expressive Writing. You may be familiar with writing in a journal, or keeping a gratitude, or victory journal. Or, perhaps you've never considered writing for self-care. You might want to try this expressive writing technique.

Expressive writing helps to reduce tension and anxiety, promotes calm, helps to release unwanted thoughts, increases awareness and enjoyment of life. I'll tell you how this works, and you will not be sharing this with anyone, and the paper you write on will be destroyed afterwards as a release.

Here's how the technique works:



- Grab a note pad (not a bound journal or notebook) and pen, not a keyboard or dictation machine. Evidence shows that the physical act of writing by hand creates this awareness and release, and does not result in the same positive release as typing on a computer or dictating your speech.
- Find a safe, quiet space where you will be uninterrupted for 20 minutes.
- Set a timer for yourself for 20 minutes. You want to give this the time you will need to not just scratch the surface, but really explore your subconscious thoughts.
- Think about something that is concerning you. It could be a general or specific feeling
- Begin writing whatever comes through your stream of consciousness and be sure to name
 - the specific emotions associated with what is coming up for you. If you pause, just repeat what you wrote. Be prepared for the unexpected, and even profanity, and just let it come out.
 - Don't edit what you wrote.
 - Don't go back and read what you've written. Don't share it.
 - After 20 minutes, you can stop, or keep writing. You'll know you are finished when you feel lighter and present.
 - Now, when you are finished tear up the paper, cut it up with a scissor, or carefully burn it outside.
 - Your thoughts, feelings, and emotions have come up, come out, and are now released. Take a deep breath, and enjoy your release and awakening.

Expressive writing is a way for us to uncover and release our emotions without having to discuss them, and without fear of having someone find our diary! I hope you can try this for your good health.

Upcoming Events



Creating Accomplishment Stories (Virtual) November 15, 2022 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM
Financial Aspects of Divorce (Virtual) November 17, 2022 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Financial Literacy - Holiday Spending on a Budget (Virtual) November 21, 2022 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Job Search Workshop: Going Beyond Job Boards (Virtual) November 29, 2022 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
The Age-Old Issue of Age in the Job Search (Virtual) December 6, 2022 10:30 PM - 12:00 PM
Financial Literacy - Managing & Reducing Debt (Virtual) December 12, 2022 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

ETIQUETTE TIPS FOR JOB SEEKERS

Notify References – When you start your job search, you should line up 2 to 3 people who can serve as references by asking their permission first before listing them on any applications. Mention to them what types of positions you are seeking and ask if they would be willing to talk about your skills and experience related to your career goals. It is also helpful to send them your current resume so they can speak directly to your past role and dates of employment.



Be Ready for Calls from Employers - Have a professional sounding voicemail message for your phone(s) so if you happen to miss an employer's call, they hear you at your best. If you answer an incoming call, be sure that you answer in professional manner and are able to talk; do not take the call if you are some place noisy or if you are busy/distracted, as it will make a poor impression. Also, remember to smile and stand up while talking (if possible). Doing both injects your voice with more energy and strength.

Keep Your Personal Email Address Professional - An email address such as *lam2hot4u@mail.com* or *catlady64@hotmail.com* leaves a lot to be desired. Displaying an informal or wacky email address on your resume or cover letter will negatively affect your image. Ditto for using an outdated email service, which shows your age; instead, create a Gmail account using your first and last name only.



Clean up your social media profiles - You may be surprised to learn that one in three employers have rejected job candidates because of something they have read about them online. So, before you begin your job search, you need to look at what you've posted online, and what others have posted about you/tagged you. Make sure your various profiles are scrubbed clean of anything that could be deemed controversial and change as many settings as you can to Private.

Be On Time (But Not Too Early) – Plan to arrive 10 minutes early for your scheduled interview, but no earlier as that tends to throw your interviewers off if they feel rushed to see you. If you run into unforeseeable events (despite allowing extra time to get there!) like inclement weather or a traffic accident, be sure to call the office to let them know and offer to reschedule if necessary.



Be Nice & Polite to Everyone - Don't limit your best behavior to those who you think "matter." How you treat the receptionist reflects on you just as much as how courteous you are to the hiring manager. Smile, shake hands, and use "please" and "thank you" at all times. If the interview itself has multiple participants, treat them all as equals by addressing everyone in the room and making eye contact.

Never chew gum, bring food or drink (other than water) or answer/check your cell phone during an interview! - While this advice might seem obvious, employers report that candidates are guilty of these interview no-no's. These actions will be seen as rude and will certainly damage your chances of getting the job.

