How to do Information Interviews

Informational interviews are a highly effective vehicle for students to successfully land a job. It is a great way to get your foot in the door, distinguish yourself from others, and to network. Not many students take advantage of informational interviews because they do not know how easy they are to obtain and how beneficial they prove to be.

An informational interview is not a "to-hire" interview, you are simply learning about their career path and current job description. Although it is not "to-hire," informational interviews can lead to a job offer or interview with that company or another in the interviewer's network. Here's a planning checklist:

Setting up the interview

- ☐ Identify several companies that interest you
- ☐ Send a letter, best if by mail [hand-written or typed] to the person you wish to emulate
- ☐ Ask for 15-20 minutes of their time for an informational interview, and if they will share their career path and insights [anyone worth working for will give you their time to help]

Preparation

- ☐ Good questions & general intent
- ☐ You are there to learn about the interviewer and gain as much information from them as possible [i.e. their job responsibilities and career path], not to openly seek a job

During

Background on yourself first
- ☐ responsibilities
- ☐ title & how long they have been at their position
- ☐ major
- ☐ interests
- ☐ trying to figure out where to start your career (corporate/small co/agency)
- ☐ where you want to go from here (grad school, work, work & grad school)
- ☐ Wrapping up the interview

Find out about them
- ☐ responsibilities
- ☐ title & how long they have been at their position
- ☐ where were they before their current job
- ☐ why did they choose the career path they did
- ☐ what do they find most rewarding / most challenging about their position

Wrapping up the interview
- ☐ Ask if they have any colleagues that they think would be good for you to talk with
- ☐ Give them your resume

After the interview

- ☐ Write a hand-written thank you note and send it out ASAP
- ☐ Reference something in the thank you note so that they will remember exactly who you are