**Developing Networking Relationships:**

**Asking for an Informational Call or Industry Chat**

**What Is an Informational Call / Industry Chat?**

This refers to a networking technique in which a job seeker invites a professional contact to engage in a conversation about an industry, career field, or company, or to seek general career advice. It is not a conversation to ask about an open position or to ask for an internal job referral, unless you already have a strong, established relationship with your contact.

**Whom to Contact**

Identify contacts who are in an aspirational role or target company or who have a strong background in an area in which you are interested. This networking technique works best for developing relationships with professionals in the field (not recruiters or talent acquisition specialists).

**How to Do It**

*LinkedIn invitation*Start by inviting your contact to join your network. If you have a LinkedIn premium account and would like to directly message your contact, you may skip this step. In the message you can:

* Introduce yourself.
* State how you are connected (shared LinkedIn group, university, company, etc.).
* State the purpose of connecting and why you want to connect.

Samples:

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| Hello [Name],  I’m currently enrolled in a software development program at [Name of University] and would like to connect to learn more about your work in the field.  Thank you,  [Your Name] |

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| --- |
| Hello [Name],  I enjoyed your recent post in the [Name of LinkedIn Group] and would love to connect to discuss it further. I’m currently studying software development at [Name of University] and am looking for opportunities to expand my knowledge of the field.  Thank you,  [Your Name] |

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| --- |
| Hello [Name],  I enjoyed your keynote address at [Name of Event] and am interested in discussing your insights. I’m currently studying software development at [Name of University] and am eager to enhance my knowledge of the field and hear any career advice you may have.  Thank you,  [Your Name] |

*Request for an informational call*Once a contact accepts your LinkedIn invitation, follow up with a thank-you note and a request for an informational call or conversation. In the note, you can:

* Restate how you are connected and what you hope to learn through your conversation.
* Customize the message based on the contact’s role and your interest in connecting with them.
* Be specific when requesting time to speak. This makes it easier for your contact to respond with their availability or an alternative follow-up method.

Sample:

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| --- |
| Good afternoon [Contact’s Name],  Thank you for accepting my LinkedIn request. As I stated in my invitation, I’m currently enrolled in a software development program at [Name of University], and I am enjoying developing my skills and broadening my knowledge in this area.  Given the breadth of work in software development, I’m hoping to learn more about your role and experience and hear any advice you have for students entering the field. Do you have availability for a 15- to 20-minute informational call within the next few weeks? After reviewing your LinkedIn profile, I’m excited to learn more about your career and industry insights.  Thank you for your time. I look forward to connecting.  Best regards,  [Your Name] |

*Additional tips*

* You can expect a 10% response rate from your outreach.
* Some professionals may not be actively engaging on LinkedIn or may be too busy to respond.