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Information Interview Reflection Paper

Over the Thanksgiving Holiday, I met with a family friend to discuss his current work industry in order to gain a better sense of the financial industry. Throughout the interview, we discussed various topics, such as his current position and duties, basic financial responsibilities, and the current trend of the financial market.

The person I interviewed was Kenneth Long, who was a close friend of my family. I had spoken to him briefly on the financial industry before this interview, but I believed that he was an ideal choice to conduct this informational interview with. Conveniently he was spending Thanksgiving Day with my family at our house this year. I contacted Mr. Long prior to Thanksgiving and asked if he could take some time out of his holiday to speak with me about his industry and career. In between watching football and eating turkey, Mr. Long and I spent roughly 30 minutes talking about the financial services industry.

During the interview, I learned that Mr. Long held a CPA and an MBA and that he worked for an investment company called Heritage Investors Management in Bethesda Maryland. This company is a small corporation that has around 12 employees but handles $2 Billion in assets. Mr. Long is one of the Vice Presidents and Advisors at this company that he’s worked at for over 20 years. His company primarily handles the investments of wealthy individuals with high care. In addition to investing, he also has done some auditing for companies. He described that the most difficult part of his job was when there was a conflict of interests, where he might receive more money for pushing certain products to investors, but that stock might not be the best option for his client.

My main concerns about the finance industry was the competitiveness of the market and if future jobs would decrease due to technology advancements. Wall Street is one of the most competitive places on earth, and the finance industry anywhere is a competitive area to work. Mr. Long showed me however that I can find success other than large corporations, and that small companies are less competitive but often just as rewarding. This heavily altered my vision of future careers. As with a decrease in the job demand for finance majors in the future, no one can predict what is going to happen with technology but there will always be a demand for those who can provide financial information.

I find it reassuring that employees working in the finance industry hold the opportunity to work in a variety of jobs. I would prefer not to be tied down to one specific job, but to become familiar in a variety of financial services. One thing that I found surprising was when I learned that Mr. Long operated with a small workforce, but still managed to handle large investments from a variety of clients.

Through this assignment of conducting an informational interview, I found it a helpful practice to discuss the financial industry with someone who has decades of experience. From this experience, I learned the value that networking can supply, by helping me make a contact in the finance field. It did seem intimidating asking a family friend to conduct an interview with me, but in the end, it was great becoming closer with Mr. Long and making a contact in the industry.

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