

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

HTTP-5205 Career Connections

What are they?

A reverse interview where you go to someone in the industry with a list of prepared questions to ask them.

Why do we do them?

- Gain information/advice we can't find elsewhere
- It serves as a practice interview and gives you confidence (you're in control)
- Introduce ourselves to the industry

What they are Not

- ▣ A job interview
- ▣ An opportunity to hand out your resume
- ▣ A job application
- ▣ A chance to 'sneak' your resume into the hands of someone you want to work for
- ▣ A way to 'trick' your way into a company by turning it into a job interview

How do I get one?

Identify and contact the person you wish to meet:

- Through your network
- By email (from company website)
- By phone
- Drop by
- At a meetup or conference

Be specific in your request for time and questions.

Be professional, undemanding and polite.

How do I prepare?

- ▣ Treat it as a business appointment
- ▣ Research
- ▣ Compile a list of questions
- ▣ “Like” and “Follow” the company and contact

What NOT to ask

- ▣ *Can I work here?*
- ▣ *Where can I find a job?*
- ▣ *Can you look at my resume?*
- ▣ *My code isn't working and I can't figure out why.*
- ▣ *How much do you make?*
- ▣ *I REALLY want to work for this other company, can you call them for me?*

What do I ask?

- ▣ General career questions and for industry advice
- ▣ Ask questions about trends in the industry, challenges the organization faces, etc.
- ▣ Ask questions not answered (or findable) anywhere else
- ▣ Possibly, ask for referrals.
- ▣ Strive for some kind of natural or logical progression to your questions.

Order the Interview

1. What was the biggest change that occurred that got you to where you are now?
2. What was your first week of work like?
3. What's the most important thing for a new grad to understand?
4. Where did you go to school?
5. What made you decide to be a web developer?

Remember...

A question reveals the questioner.

Use your questions to show that you are a thinker, passionate about web development, and plan to invest yourself in the industry.

What do I do in the interview?

1. Be punctual. This is a must.
2. Explain why you have set up the interview - what you hope to get out of it (don't ask them for a job!)
3. Provide an overview of your career goals, experience, accomplishments and skills
4. Ask your questions.
5. Take short notes (on paper)
6. Ask in advance if you plan to record
7. Stick to the time/questions agreed upon
8. Don't bring out your resume – not even 'accidentally'
9. Express your gratitude and get a business card

How do I follow up?

RIGHT AWAY

- ▣ Expand on your notes while they are fresh in your mind
- ▣ Ask yourself:
 - *What did you learn about the industry?*
 - *What misconceptions did you correct?*
 - *What are the most important new facts that you learned?*
 - *Where are the gaps between your current skill set and where you want to be?*
 - *What questions were not answered?*
 - *What new questions do you have?*
- ▣ Send a thank you email (and card?)
- ▣ No resume! - unless requested.

How do I follow up?

SOONER, RATHER THAN LATER

- ▣ Follow up on their suggestions (especially new contacts!)
- ▣ Let them know that you have followed up (and thank them!)

How do I follow up?

AT THE REQUESTED INTERVAL

- ▣ Honour any invitation for future contact
- ▣ Do not approach them for a job unless they invite it
- ▣ Maintain rapport and relationship - professionally

Sample Questions

(of general informational interview questions)

How do people normally break into the field?

What skills and personal qualities are most important for success?

What education and training is needed?

What do you do on a typical day?

What do you enjoy most/least?

What are the biggest challenges?

Who else do you recommend I speak with (and if so, may I use your name)?

Sources:

canadiancareers.com/infointerview.html

jobsearch.about.com/od/infointerviews/a/infointerafter.htm

Questions?

Sources:

canadiancareers.com/infointerview.html

jobsearch.about.com/od/infointerviews/a/infointerafter.htm