

GEER UP NEWSLETTER

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UPLIFTING PROFESSIONALS



THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW ISSUE

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01 ---- WELCOME! ----

GEER UP stands for **G**overnor’s **E**mergency **E**ducation **R**elief, **U**plifting **P**rofessionals.
Stay up to date with taking a class/classes, earning your certification or license, and making your next career move.

Are you Certified or Licensed yet?

Earn your CERTIFICATION or LICENSE today!

Please note: That while the GEER program has ended, much of the information in this newsletter is helpful to anyone who wishes to find a job and get Certified or Licensed.



02 ---- Informational Interviews – What they Are and How they Help ----

Written by Sean Wright

If you aren't sure what an informational interview is, don't worry, you are in good company, and they aren't too complicated. Informational interviews (sometimes called "Coffee Chats") give you the opportunity to learn more about your chosen career pathway, what you will likely need to do to continue to prepare for your career and how to be a competitive candidate for a new position or promotion. This article goes into some detail about how to set up and conduct informational interviews and how this can meaningfully grow your professional network.

So what is an informational interview? An informational interview gives you the opportunity understand your career field from the unique perspective of the person you are interviewing and gain insights that will inform your career pathway. It is a part of your career search and research, and you need to take the initiative in setting them up. First you need to identify the professional area of interest for you, then you want to identify a few people who are doing the work you are interested in doing yourself. You can search professionals on LinkedIn to find and reach out to those already doing what you are hoping to do. Send them an InMail message (in LinkedIn) about your interest in learning more about their work. You can also reach out to people you know in the field or industry and see who they can introduce you to who is doing the work you want to do. A warm introduction from a connection may get a better response.

When you reach out you don't want to ask for too much time, usually 20 to 30 minutes is a reasonable ask. When the informational interview is set up, take time to do your research so that you can ask informed questions and make a great impression. Learn about the person from their LinkedIn profile, about the company they work for, and don't ask questions that basic research online could answer. Once you've asked fantastic questions and made a good impression, you should ask if there is anyone they would recommend you speak to for more information.

The general focus of the interview should be on the person you are speaking to, their journey to where they are now, and how they prepared. You can ask about what they love about their work, what has surprised them, and what they wished they knew before going into their career among other questions. In your career search and research I am sure you have had questions arise that you haven't found answers to, so reflect on your journey and preparation to date, and identify any important questions you still want answers to.

It is a good idea to have your questions written down and be able to take notes. If chatting in person, get the conversation started, then ask if you can take notes. This helps set the stage for connecting with the person and shows you are really interested in remembering key details. If it's over the phone and you want to jot down something they share, you can mention that you are taking notes, especially if there is a pause in conversation, and express the value of what they are sharing. At the end of the interview when you thank them for their time you should refer to something discussed during your conversation. You can see if the line of communication will stay open after the informational interview, asking, if you have follow up questions, if it is okay to reach out to them again.

Follow up the interview with a thank you message to their LinkedIn inmail or their email address. When informational interviews go well and you keep in touch afterwards, you can update the person on how the information they shared has helped you. You can also consider how you can add value to what she or he is doing professionally by sending relevant articles or information. By keeping in touch monthly or quarterly, you are more likely to come to mind when a good opportunity for you comes across their desk. This gives you access to the hidden job market!

Below you will find a number of articles and videos that go into some more detail about informational interviews. Best of luck!

03 ---- RESOURCES FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS ----

Articles:

UC Berkeley Article, Benefits, 6 Steps of Informational Interviewing:

<https://career.berkeley.edu/Info/InfoInterview>

How to Get the Most Out of an Informational Interview:

<https://hbr.org/2016/02/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-an-informational-interview>

How to Ask for an Informational Interview:

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-ask-for-an-informational-interview-and-get-a-yes>

3 Steps to a Perfect Informational Interview:

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/3-steps-to-a-perfect-informational-interview>

Videos:

Informational Interviews, Best Questions to Ask: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4b2iagdHw8M>

Mistakes to Avoid: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_L2aWCdO4A

Mock Informational Interview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJ_yPCmpJm0&t=300s