

“Information Gathering” Questions

Sample introduction phrases for setting up the meeting:

“Hello, my name is _____. My aunt, Ruth Anderson, suggested you may be a good person for me to talk with about the marketing field. I am thinking about changing careers from Journalism to Marketing. Would you have 15 minutes to talk with me about your experiences in the field of Marketing?”

“Hi, this is _____. I was recently laid off from Qwest and I am exploring some different career options. I have been attending the Job Club at the MN WorkForce Center and was given your name as a referral contact about my interest in Wells Fargo. Would you have a few minutes for me to ask you a couple of questions?”

Following is a suggested list of questions that can be helpful to ask in an informational interview or information gathering meeting. Create your own list based on these suggestions, and tailor the questions to the kinds of information you are seeking about the job or career field.

About the person you are interviewing:

1. How did you enter this field? What has been your career path? How long have you been working in this job?
2. What is your typical day like in this position?
3. What challenges/frustrations do you face?
4. What are your favorite parts of this job? What gives you the most satisfaction?
5. Would you enter this field again if you could start over?

About the company/organization in which they work:

6. What is the culture/environment like at this organization?
7. Who are your major competitors?
8. Are there opportunities for growth at this company?
9. Where does the organization’s funding come from? Is there stability in this funding?
10. Who are your customers? Who do you serve?

About the industry/field:

11. What type of preparation, credentials, and training would I need to enter this field?
12. Is there growth in this field? What is the job potential?
13. What can I do, if I enter the field, to make myself marketable and competitive?
14. What kind of people do well in this type of position?
15. What experiences would be helpful for someone entering this field?
16. What are the typical entry-level salary and benefits? (or ask for a salary range)
17. Do you have any recommendations for me if I consider entering this field?
18. Do you know of any other people who might be helpful for me to talk with? May I use your name when I call them?