

Never call ahead, just go there instead

Go to the place of interest and present yourself personally (stats: those who call ahead get an interview 5% of the time vs. those who just go there get an interview 95% of the time - it is much easier for someone to simply put you off or hang up on you over the phone.)

However, if you have a referral from a person it is more appropriate to call and set up an appointment.

Day of the week

Never go on Monday morning or Friday afternoon

On Monday mornings individuals are just starting to catch up with work that they have left unfinished from Friday. They are also trying to pick up speed and get into the swing of work for the week. Therefore if you are going to go on an interview Monday, go on a Monday AFTERNOON.

Friday afternoons are times that individuals are trying to wrap things up and leave work. People's minds are on attempting to get out of the office and begin their weekend activities. They will have little time to sit and speak with anyone while they are so preoccupied. Consequently, if you are going to perform an information interview on a Friday, go in the MORNING.

Time of day

Go between the hours of 9:00 and 10:00am or 1:30 and 2:30pm

Most people don't usually have other meetings until about 10:00 or so. After lunch people don't usually begin again until after 2:30

Tell the receptionist that you are requesting an information interview, not a job interview

Make sure that the receptionist is clear that you are here to gather information about this person's career and/or position. Not to learn about job opportunities. Explain that you are considering different careers and evidence from your career self-assessment indicates that that the position you have indicated appears to be an appropriate option for you. Also mention that you are doing this as a student.

Once your objective is clear many receptionists will be very helpful. In fact they may help you get the interview also. If no one is currently available ask the receptionist to request an appointment for a more convenient time.

Do not mistake and Informational Interview for a JOB INTERVIEW

Informational interviews are not job interviews, however, your probability of a job offer will increase as you do more information interviews. For instance, if you perform three of these interviews for the same occupational area, your chance of getting a job offer is about 25%. If on the other hand, you opt to do eight or more information interviews, then the likelihood of a job offer increases to about 95%.

During the interview

Dress well and appropriately for that environment.

Be relaxed and sit at a comfortable distance from the person you are interviewing.

Shake this person's hand and thank them for taking the time to speak with you.

In addition, state again the purpose of the interview and be prepared to clarify the distinction between an information interview and a job interview, if you are requested to do so.

Resumes

People often take the job offer information to heart and bring their resumes with them on information interviews. However, the purpose of the information interview is definitely not to obtain a job or a job offer. Informational interviews are for gathering information. The job offers you may obtain are just a pleasant "side-effect" of the process. Never compromise the intent of the information interview by bringing a resume with you. The individual with whom you are speaking will rightly interpret your behavior as an attempt to subvert the normal job interview process. Such behavior is clearly unacceptable, and an insult to the person who has agreed to take some time out of his or her busy schedule to provide you with helpful career information. So please, never, ever carry your resume with you to the information interview. However, be ready to send it to them if they ask for it.

The end of the interview

Shake the person's hand and thank them. Also ask them for a card and send them a thank you letter. Follow up on any/all recommendations they gave you.

The thank you letter

Send it out the next day

Thank them for taking the time to listen, answer questions, and help you in your career exploration. When the person receives the letter they will feel like it was time well spent.

If they enjoyed the interview (most people do) and they thought you were intelligent (which they will for asking for an interview in the first place) they are likely to remember you when they do hear about opportunities and contact you to let you know about them.

Courtesy of: World of work, Inc.