

# Information Interviewing

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## (Sample Questions)

(Where you read “this organization” substitute the actual name of the organization in your question)

### Company Overview

- What are the functions of your organization / department? What does your organization do?
- What products or services does this organization produce?
- Can you tell me about the background / history of this organization?
- Who are your customers?
- Who are your competitors? Where do you rank among the competition?
- What unique factors would you say set this organization apart from others?
- Do you have any organizational literature that would help me to learn more about this company?
- What values or philosophy does this organization claim to have?
- How are decisions made in this organization / your department (team effort/empowerment or top-down)?
- What basic assumptions or beliefs would you say are shared and supported by people in this industry or organization?

### Position(s) Overview

- What do you do in a typical work day or work week in your position?
- What positions do you supervise (if any)?
- What are some of the other types of positions in this industry?
- What type of entry-level positions would exist in this field / organization for someone just graduating from college?
- Do you have a copy of an organizational chart that would show me the progression of jobs from beginning to the top, as well as the reporting and supervision lines?
- Do you have any information on job specifications or job descriptions that I could have?

### Occupational / Organizational Interests

- How did you personally get interested in this field?
- What attracted you to this organization / company in particular?

### Working Conditions

- What obligations does your work place upon you outside the standard 40 hour work week?
- Are there any travel obligations with your position?
- If there is overtime, is it due more to the nature of this field or the nature of this particular organization?
- How do your work requirements balance with your family / personal commitments?
- Can you leave work at work, or do you take work home with you?
- What is the typical dress code in this industry / at this organization?
- Can you speak about such factors as noise level, privacy, company morale, physical surroundings, and the overall environment (ie. is it tense or familial, high pressure or laid back)?
- What compromises or trade-offs are there in your career field (ethical, financial, etc.)?

## **Compensation**

- What range of salaries are appropriate for the various positions in your organization? (entry, mid-level and top salaries)
- Do salary ranges vary by employer or region? How does your organization compare to the competition?
- What type of benefits are associated with this organization? (investments, education reimbursement, bonuses, etc.)

## **Advancement Opportunities**

- What is the typical career path of someone in this organization? What is the time-line associated with that career path?
- What opportunities exist internally for advancement or change of position.

## **Outlook of the Company / Field**

- Have there been any noticeable trends in this industry?
- What is the outlook for this field / organization regarding growth, advancement or upcoming changes in general?
- What is the demand and security level for employees in this field/organization?

## **Satisfaction Level**

- What do you find most rewarding about your work? Least rewarding?
- If you were ever to leave this kind of work, what would the reason be?
- Are your major frustrations internal or external factors?

## **Job Preparation / Requirements**

- What specific skills or aptitudes would someone need to enter this field?
- What personal qualities or attributes (temperament, attitudes, values, beliefs, etc.) seem to serve a person well in this type of work?
- What expectations does this organization have of its employees?
- What special training or specific education (degree or coursework) is required? Is a graduate degree required?
- What kind of part-time work experience could help someone to prepare for this field?
- Are any particular licenses or certifications essential in this field?
- My strongest interests involve (fill in the blank). Would this job allow me to use these skills?
- How well suited is my background for this kind of work?
- Are there any special problems or concerns someone considering this kind of work should prepare for?

## **Related Fields**

- What fields (if any) do people seem to “shift from” and do well in your career area?
- What fields (if any) do people leave this industry to pursue?
- What other fields are related to this one?

## **Job Search Techniques**

- How did you get your position in this organization?
- What steps did you take to get from your initial position to where you are now? (if advancement took place)
- What do you suggest is the best strategy for obtaining an entry-level position in this field?
- How/where are most positions for this organization or this industry advertised?

**Advice / Recommendations**

- What would you advise people entering into this kind of career?
- What should a person look for in an organization such as this as they consider positions?
- Do you have any suggestions for my resume?
- Do you have any suggestions about my interpersonal skills?
- Are there any questions I didn't ask that you feel I should?
- Would you mind if I contacted you / met with you again in the future if I need more advice or information?

**Referrals (don't forget!!)**

- Based on our conversation today, is there anyone else you think would be helpful for me to talk with to get more information about this field or organization?
- May I mention your name as the person who referred me? Would you be willing to let them know I plan to contact them?