



Informational Interviews

Purpose

Informational interviews are a wonderful way to learn about careers that may be of interest to you. Conduct informational interviews with upper-level managers, business owners, or other appropriate professionals in the organizations or careers of greatest interest to you. Choose these organizations and individuals carefully, to reflect your career aspirations. Use these opportunities to explore professions of greatest interest by interviewing recognized leaders.

If you do not currently know of any individuals with whom you would like to conduct an informational interview, you are encouraged to expand your network. Utilize the networking resources available on The Citadel Career Center's website, LinkedIn, and The Citadel Alumni Association Online Community (if you have access) to expand your network. If you have questions about how to use these resources, contact The Citadel Career Center.

Making the Request

If requesting **by email**, your request should generally follow this format:

Dear Mr. Wilson,

I am a ____ (Senior, Junior) at The Citadel, majoring in _____. I am very interested in learning more about entering a career in _____. To help me in this regard, may I please schedule a 15-minute meeting with you for either (date 1 or date 2) in your office?

Thank you very much for your help. I look forward to meeting with you.

Very respectfully,

John Smith
Class of _____, The Citadel
843 123 4567

If requesting **by phone**, your call to the individual should generally follow this format:

"Hello. My name is _____. I am a ____ (Senior, Junior) at The Citadel, majoring in _____. I am very interested in learning more about entering a career in _____. To help me in this regard, may I please schedule a 15-minute meeting with you for either (date 1 or date 2) in your office? What time that day would be best for you? (Verify directions, including office number.) Thank you very much for your help, Mr./Ms. _____. I look forward to meeting with you."

Developing Your Questions

The sequence of questions should be:

1. Focus on the **Industry** and the **Organization**
2. Focus on the **Interviewee**
3. Focus on **You**

You are encouraged to ask questions based on your interests, but be sure your questions are appropriate. **Never ask for a job or internship. Do NOT ask about salary or other confidential information** when you are conducting an informational interview.

Sample Questions

The following questions are designed to help you develop your list of questions. Add to or revise this list of questions as needed. If in doubt as to the appropriateness of a question, please ask The Citadel Career Center.

Focus on the Industry and the Organization

1. What do you believe are the three greatest challenges facing your industry today?
2. What trends do you see that present the greatest opportunities for your organization?
3. How important is foreign competition to your firm? Do opportunities exist for cooperative efforts (e.g., joint ventures) with foreign firms?
4. How is your organization changing (in structure, strategy, etc.)?

Focus on the Interviewee

1. What is your philosophy of management, i.e. what is most important in working with and motivating people?
2. What do you believe best promotes employee productivity?
3. Which skills are most-prized in your organization?
4. To reach your current position, what steps did you take (prior positions, etc.)?

Focus on You

1. How may a person earn a position in your organization? Are internships available? If so, how may such an internship be arranged?
2. What should I do to make myself the strongest possible competitor in this industry? [You may offer your resume for his/her suggestions at this time; use your best judgment.]

The Day of Your Informational Interview

Bring two copies of your typed question list to the interview, offering one to the interviewee. Be sure your name and contact information are provided at the top of the page. For example:

Informational Interview with Mr. Edward Reynolds
President, King Investment Co.
Nov. 15, 10:00 a.m.

John Smith, Business Administration Senior, The Citadel
smithj1@citadel.edu 843 953 1234

1. Question One
2. Question Two, etc.

Also bring two copies of your resume, on resume quality paper and printed using a laser printer.

After the Interview

After the interview, thank the interviewee for his/her help by sending a thank you email or letter/card. Stay in periodic contact with your interviewee, as needed and appropriate.