

Ten Questions to Ask During an Informational Interview

Summary: *Informational interviews are the best way to learn the truth of what you need to work for a company and what a specific job is like.*



Informational interviews can be hard to get because it benefits the interviewee in no way. This becomes worse when you take up part of their day and have nothing important to ask. Before crawling and begging for an interview from someone that has your dream job or works for your dream company, have something to say to eliminate any awkward silences or make them feel like they have helped you.

- See **The Do's and Don'ts of Informational Interviewing** for more information.

Research the company and the person by studying LinkedIn pages, Twitter profiles, and company bios to find out information to help fuel the conversation. The interview should almost be like a first



date. Be friendly, casual but not overly so, compliment slyly, have a sense of humor, and be interested in the person.

Question 1: “I know you spent (x) amount of years before working here, so how did you get started in this industry?”

This question makes it obvious that you have done your research so that they don't have to spend time explaining their life story.

Question 2: “Is there something you wish you'd known or a skill you'd had starting out? Or is there something you wish you had done differently?”

You are bound to get some useful information out of this question. Taking advantage of another's mistakes is a great opportunity to learn.

Question 3: “What is the culture like here compared to your last company?”

Most people have worked at more than one company in the same industry. Getting a comparison from someone with firsthand knowledge will help you know if the company is one to work towards.

Question 4: “What is your biggest challenge in this role?”

If they have a position that you hope to have some day, then this question will help you prepare and know what to expect.

Question 5: “Is there anything you dislike about this company?”

Specific employees will give you the honest truth about a company, whereas a hiring manager will not.

Question 6: “Would you mind taking a quick look at my resume?”

This person may have a role in the hiring of the company, so having them **take a look at your resume** will help you know what flaws you have.

Question 7: “How does my experience stack up to others applying for [insert specific job]?”



This question is only important if they deal with hiring.

Question 8: “What type of personalities fit in best at your company?”

This question is very important. Some companies have definite “types”, so now is the time for you to find out if you fit in before you spend the time applying.

Question 9: “What is the best way to get my foot in the door here?”

The interview is a chance to learn what your next steps are to get into the company.

Question 10: “Is there anyone else you think I should speak with?”

You should be able to gather more names of people to talk to. If you don’t, you did something wrong during the interview.

Photo: studentbranding.com