



TIP SHEET

ENHANCE YOUR RESEARCH WITH INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational interviews are a great opportunity to go deeper into your research of an organization enabling you to ferret out information and insights that are not available online and get to the heart of the organization.

This tip sheet will provide you with:

1. An informational interview request email template to send to potential teammates and other employees of the organization.
2. A template of SWOT questions to ask for a good snapshot of the company's "health" and culture.

Remember the following points when contacting a potential teammate:

1. Keep your request short and to the point
2. Contact them via email, LinkedIn, or phone
3. Remember, it's a numbers game - email at least five people and interview at least two
4. Pick three to five questions from our list of suggested questions on page 4 and keep them in mind.



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

At the informational interview:

1. Dress in the same way you would for the job interview
2. Introduce yourself with your name, a brief overview of yourself and your education and briefly remind the interviewer of your objective for the meeting
3. Take notes
4. Be respectful of the interviewer's time and stick to your time slot
5. Ask for the names of others who may be able to give you more information or a different perspective
6. After the information interview, send a thank-you note

Informational Interview Request Template

Dear XXX,

I am an MBA student with XXX and I am currently interviewing with [NAME OF INTERVIEWER] for the role of [NAME OF ROLE]. I saw through our mutual connections on [social media source] that you also work with [NAME OF INTERVIEWER], and [reason for why you are reaching out to them specifically- "your career journey is similar to what I would like to achieve"].

As part of my preparation for the interview, I am keen to learn more about the [team/role/organization- choose/delete as appropriate] so that I can understand more about the current culture and priorities of the organization/team.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to chat with you and gain some perspective on the points above. Do you have some time this week to speak with me in person or by phone for twenty minutes?

Many thanks,
XXX



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational Interview Thank-You Note Template

Dear XXX,

Thank you for your time today.

I now have a much better understanding of the [organization's/the team's] priorities and the culture and industry within which you carry out your work.

I am meeting with [interviewer name] next week and look forward to sharing my learning.

As you suggested, I am going to [something you will do, such as reach out to a specific person, or join a specific group]

I valued the opportunity to speak with you today. [Here, insert something meaningful that you took away from the meeting]. Thank you for your time and insight.

Many thanks,
XXX

SWOT Questions

Take the time to consider asking questions that will help you to complete your SWOT analysis. You will then be in a good position to update your interview answers with information you have learned from these informational interviews.

The following page presents some example questions you can use.



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What do you like about the organization?2. How would you describe the culture of the organization/team?3. What makes the team/the organization successful?4. Are there any new product/service launches happening in the next six months?5. What is the main income for the organization?6. From an employee's point of view, what does the organization excel at?7. What area the pay and benefits, work/life balance, development opportunities?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What, if anything, do you dislike about the organization?2. What is the toughest part of your job?3. What does the organization/team need to improve upon?4. What is the biggest financial challenge that the organization is facing?5. In what ways does the organization fail to meet its goals? For example, are there customer service challenges, or materials shortages?
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the top three priorities of the organization/team this year?2. Considering the people you work with and the leadership team, what attributes does one need to have to succeed in this role/organization?3. Who are your stakeholders?4. Who else would be a good person to connect with to find out more?5. What are the biggest financial opportunities for the organization?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the biggest challenges the organization is facing today?2. How does this company compare with its competitors?3. What is the customer's biggest concern right now?4. What challenges do employees face on a daily basis?