Informational Interviewing

Informational interviewing is a technique used to explore and research occupations and organizations. Informational interviewing is used in nearly all career planning and job search books as a strategy that works. It involves talking with people who work in an occupation you are considering, potential employers, or simply contacts who may help provide further contacts for you. Informational interviewing has several benefits, including:

1. Discovering “first-hand” information about an occupation. Reference books can provide facts about an occupation, such as salary and demand, but informational interviews provide a personalized perspective of an occupation or job.

2. Access to the “hidden” job market. Only 20% of all job openings are advertised!! Direct contact and networking is essential to finding out about unadvertised job openings. Informational interviewing is not a job interview, but it can be a helpful first step in eliciting information about a prospective employer.

3. Improvement of self-confidence and interviewing skills

You will conduct interviews with 2 persons who have a job(s) of interest to you (specific guidelines will be covered in class). You may interview 2 people in the same career field, but in different settings, or you may interview 2 people in different career fields.

Write a 3-4 page summary (typed, double-spaced) of the interviews, including:
   1. Detailed description of the job(s) and what it/they involve(s) (1 ½ pages).
   2. Detailed description of the way these interviews affected your knowledge about careers and your own career exploration (1 ½ pages).
   3. What new information, ideas, and insights did you gain?
   4. Did the interviews increase or decrease your interest in the field(s)? Explain.
   5. Does the job(s) match your interests, values, personality, and skills? Explain.

You must provide me with the names of the individuals you are thinking about contacting before you conduct the interviews.

At the beginning of the report, you must either attach a business card of the contact or provide complete contact information, including job title, address, and phone number. Although a personal interview is preferred, a phone interview is acceptable for ONE interview out-of-town. At least one interview, therefore, must be in person. Faculty, friends, and family members are not appropriate interviewees for this assignment. The people you select to interview should have at least two years of experience in their respective fields.
1. What is a typical day like in the life of ____________________________? 
2. How did you get interested in this occupation? 
3. What do you like and dislike about your occupation? 
4. What is a typical career path in this occupation? 
5. What kind of academic/training preparation is required for this occupation? 
6. What is the projected growth of this occupation? 
7. What skills should I be developing? 
8. Are there any clubs or organizations you would recommend joining? 
9. What is the organizational structure and where does your position fit within the organization? 
10. Is there someone else you can suggest for me to contact? 
11. If you were going to hire a new entry level person, what would a highly qualified candidate be like? 
12. What are the major challenges/problems that your organization is facing in the upcoming year? 
13. What are some job titles for entry level positions in this field? 
14. Are there any related occupations with similar qualifications? 

**Step 6: Conducting the Interview.** You should dress in business attire. Arrive approximately 10 minutes early for the interview. When you meet your interview contact(s), you should shake hands and exchange greetings. Take notes during the interviews. At the end of each interview, shake hands again, and express your appreciation for the interview.

You should send a thank you note (written or emailed) to your contact(s) following the interviews.

Prepare your own questions for the Informational Interviews. Extra credit will be given for questions you created.