

Networking 411 Questions

Prior to the Event:

- Research the company or organization – there is a list of those attending on the career mentoring website that is updated regularly.
- Have questions prepared that you want to ask (see list below)
- Ask yourself “what is it that you really want to know about this person, company, industry or occupation” and target your questions accordingly.



Questions to Consider Asking:

Review this list, selecting the questions you feel most important to ask during the conversation.

Work Environment

- What does a typical day look like?
- What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?
- What kinds of problems, challenges and/or successes do you encounter?

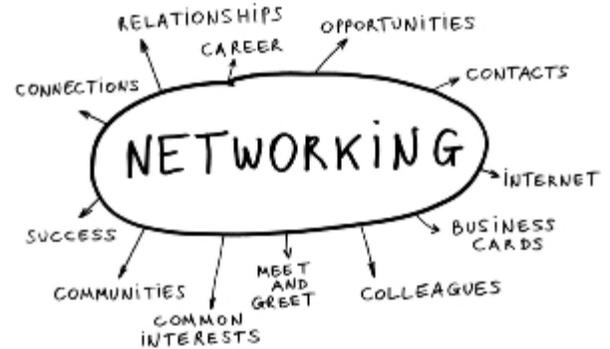
Pre-requisites/Education

- How did you get started in this work?
- What jobs and experiences led to your present position?
- Can you suggest some ways a student could enhance their skills before completing school?
- What work or volunteer experiences did you have before you entered this occupation?
- Which have been most helpful and why?
- What skills are most important for a position in this field?
- What are the educational requirements for this job?
- What other types of credentials or licences are required?
- What types of training or professional development do employers encourage and support for their employees?
- How well did your university (or college) experience prepare you for this work?
- What courses have proved to be the most valuable for your work? What courses would you recommend a student take?
- How important are grades/GPA for obtaining employment in this field?
- Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?

- What kinds of experience, paid or unpaid, would you encourage for anybody pursuing a career in this field?

Occupation/Company Information

- What are the most important personal satisfactions and dissatisfactions connected with your occupation?
- What part of this job do you personally find most satisfying? Most challenging?
- What do you like and not like about working in this industry?
- Why did you decide to work for your company?
- What do you like most about this company?
- What do you find exciting (or not) about this position? Why?
- What does the future of the company look like?
- How does a person usually progress in your company/field?
- In what ways is this industry changing?
- What is the employment outlook in this field? Is the demand for people changing? In what ways?
- What trends in the field would be most likely to affect someone just entering this career?
- What are the typical entry-level job titles and functions?
- What geographical regions seem to have the best employment options?



Personal Qualities Suited for this Occupation/Company

- What skills or personal characteristics do you feel contribute most to success in this industry or position?
- What characteristics make people stand out in your workplace (for good and bad reasons)
- What sacrifices have you had to make to succeed in this field, and do you feel the sacrifices were worth it?
- When people leave this career, what are the usual reasons?
- What kinds of people experience the greatest success in this field?
- What are more important – technical skills or soft skills (attitude, work ethic, personality, etc.)?
- What is the most important thing that someone planning to enter this career should know?

Job Search

- How did you secure your employment? Your career story and goals... (through their stories excellent advice is usually shared)
- Do you have any work search advice for a summer/recent grad interested in this field/position?
- How would you approach a job search for this organization/industry?
- What are the various jobs available in this field? And what positions would be most suitable for a student/recent graduate to consider starting with?
- What strengths, qualities, skills, etc. is your company looking for?



- What is the best work search advice you have received?
- Does volunteer work make an impact in the hiring process, and if so what advice do you have for finding career related volunteer opportunities?
- Would it be too forward to e-mail you my resume for some expert feedback?
- How is the economy affecting this industry?
- How do I find information on the jobs not posted?
- How important is networking in this line of work and where are the best networking opportunities?
- Are there any clubs or organizations I should join to better connect with individuals in this line of work?

Career Building Advice

- What is the best career building/managing advice you have received?
- What would you change about how you have managed your career?
- Have you made deliberate moves to enhance your career?
- How has LUCK impacted your career?
- Are you doing the job now that you thought you would when you were 18 years old?
- Have you set specific targets or goals for your career building?
- What role has education (formal and informal) played in your career building?
- Have you experienced career changes or shifts? And if yes what motivated these changes?

Closing Questions

- Who else do you suggest I speak with?
- If I have additional questions, can I contact you?
- Are there others in your company that agree to do informational interviews?

Specific Questions for International Students

- Is there specific advice you would offer an international student in their work search?
- As an international student have you noticed companies in this industry that have hired international students in the past?
- Knowing it is more difficult to secure work as an international student are there activities I should be doing now to improve my career opportunities?
- How can I leverage my education, experiences and international experience for employment opportunities?

Follow-up:

- At end of the conversation verbally thank for taking the time to offer advice and career information
- Follow-up with an e-mail an update, or words of thank you, as appropriate.
 - o For example if they suggested you speak with a colleague in another department or different city, let them know you followed through and the information was useful.

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