



GUIDE TO Informational Interviews

a.k.a
Coffee
with a
Professional

As you develop contacts, try to arrange informational interviews or a brief coffee to gain further insight into occupations, opportunities and organizations.

How to Find Contacts

- **Family, friends and neighbors.** Is there anyone you can find through talking with the people close to you?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

- **Faculty, staff and events.** Ask faculty and staff for recommendations, attend events on campus like the Career Fair, Industry Tours, departmental events, and connect with class speakers.

- **Explore CSU Alumni on LinkedIn.** Use the “Find Alumni” tab on LinkedIn to check out those who have careers that interest you.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Prepare

- **Do your research.** Develop tailored questions based on prior research of the individual and organization.
- **Explore their path.** Ask about the individual’s career path and impressions of the field.
- **Be specific.** Don’t ask about things that can be easily found on a website.
- **Be respectful.** Even if you are looking for a job or internship, it is not appropriate to ask for one during an informational interview.

Interview Goals

The primary goal of an informational interview is to gather information and obtain advice, while making a positive impression. While there may not be immediate job opportunities, positive connections can prove valuable later.

Ask Questions

Increase the chances that an informational interview will go smoothly by preparing questions in advance:

- How did you choose this career field?
- What skills, personal qualities or abilities are important to being successful in this field or job?
- What has your career path looked like?

You try some some questions: _____

Obtain Advice and Referrals

- **Seek advice.** Based on the individual's knowledge and experience, ask what they think your next steps should be.
- **Meet others.** Ask if there are other individuals or organizations they feel you should contact and whether you may state that you were referred by them.

Make a Lasting Impression

- **Show your professionalism.** Always be professional and courteous of their time.
- **Bring your resume.** This helps your new contact understand your experience level and tailor their advice.
- **Follow up with a thank you email.** This should be sent within 24 hours. Mention at least one piece of advice they gave you and how you will pursue their recommendations.
- **Stay in touch.** Provide updates on your progress from time to time to maintains a connection.



Visit career.colostate.edu to access *Ram Career Tool* and *Ram Career Ready* for more info.