

Interview/Email Templates

An important aspect of networking that can sometimes seem intimidating to students, is setting up an initial informational interview with a current professional, recruiter, or acquaintance. However, seeking to set up informational interviews with professionals in your desired career not only gives you real insight into their day-to-day, but it also has the potential to create a contact who can continue to be a resource to you in your job search.

1. First, identify those who may be helpful to network with.

You can do this by identifying interesting companies and looking at their website, LinkedIn, or Handshake profiles for people that work at the firm/company. LinkedIn is a great resource, as it allows you to see who works at a company and see if you have any connections that may work there.

Once you've identified who you would like to network with, the next step is to

2. See what common starting point you may have with them.

They could be from the same geographical area, a CU alum, or it could be something more light-hearted such as you both play a musical instrument or are Michigan Wolverine fans! The easiest situation is when you see that you both have a mutual connection on LinkedIn. If that is the case, the best approach would be to contact your mutual connection, via LinkedIn or email, and politely ask them to make an intro for you!

Example:

"Dear [mutual connection],

I hope you are doing well since we have last had the opportunity to catch up! Classes are keeping me busy, and I've been heavily recruiting for job opportunities.

I noticed on LinkedIn while researching [company name], that you had a contact that worked at the company. I'm interested in working at the company and was wondering if you had any advice on the company itself or key people to connect with at the company.

If you were willing, I'd love to hear your advice and if you would be willing to make an introduction, if appropriate.

*Thank you!
[your name]"*

If you do not have any information on the contact you would like to network with, you may need to

3. Send a "cold email."

These are also perfectly acceptable and can be a great way to make a new connection.

- The ideal networking email is polite, concise, and respectful of the individual's busy schedule.
- You want to share how you admire their career, create a personal connection, and politely ask for further opportunities to learn.

Example:

"Dear [contact's name],

I hope this note finds you well! My name is [your name], and I am a current student at Cedarville University, studying [major].

I am interested in [name position at the company] and was wondering if you would be willing to speak for a brief 10-15 minute phone call in the coming weeks to speak about your experience at the firm. I am sure you have a very full schedule, but if you are willing, I would be grateful and happy to work around it.

I heard about [either the contact or the company], and [list a personal connection, reason you are drawn to the individual or firm]. I would be honored to have a few minutes of your time to learn from your experience and industry expertise.

*Thank you for your time,
[Your name]"*

4. Tips for an informational interview

- Come well prepared with conversation topics, questions, etc. This individual has taken time out of their day to connect with you, and it is on you to drive the conversation!
- The best networking calls are casual, and personal, with well-thought-out questions. Starting the conversation by simply asking about their day, or with light conversation, will help you both ease into the conversation, and keep it relaxed. You don't want it to seem like an interrogation where you fire 20 questions at them. Ask your questions strategically, as the conversation leads.
- Most importantly, enjoy yourself and be thankful! This individual has connected with you because they WANT to help you! Enjoy the opportunity to meet someone new and learn from their advice.
- Try to keep it to 15 minutes, 30 minutes max, and always be respectful of their time and ask before extending the meeting.

Example questions:

1. *I would love to hear a bit more about your story/career progression, and how you ended up at the company!*
2. *What do your DTD responsibilities look like?*
3. *What are your long-term career plans/do you see yourself in this role for a long time/what other roles have interested you?*
4. *What steps would you recommend I take to enter this field?*

5. *Any other key individuals/steps I should take as I am pursuing this job opportunity?*
6. *Can ask about certifications/licenses/grad school*
7. Research their specific role, background, and ask personalized and questions that show you've done the work and thought it out ahead of time!
8. Career Services Office has additional questions!

5. Always Send a Thank You Note Afterwards

Example:

"Dear [contact name],

Thank you so much again for taking the time to chat this afternoon! It was a pleasure to learn more about [company name] and hear about your own story and learn from that experience. Thank you for your advice on [specific advice, things you learned from them].

I would love to keep in touch and follow up as I [follow any advice/actions steps they gave you].

Thank you again!

[Your name]

Did you know Career Services has FREE thank you notes for you to send to your career contacts/interviewers? Ask them about it!

6. Bonus Tip: A great way to keep the relationship, is to **follow up after 3-4 weeks**, or a month after you've done what they've advised. It shows you took their advice to heart and followed through, and they will be more likely to help you in the future!

*Written by Joseph Skidmore
2022 Finance/Economics Alum*