



CAREER NETWORK

Build and maintain a network of professional contacts

Our network consists of contacts such as friends, family, classmates, instructors, and coworkers. These contacts help us learn about careers and find internships and jobs. Building and maintaining a network of working professionals is an increasingly important currency in the workplace. The most current and specific information about a career field comes from people working in that field whether we are looking for information, advice, or a job. There are many ways you can build your career network. You can get to know professors and classmates. You can also join professional and student organizations related to your career field. You can do an internship. You can also conduct informational interviews and job shadows.

Informational Interviews and Job Shadows

An informational interview is an informal conversation, typically 30 minutes, with a professional working in an area of interest. Informational interviews are best conducted at the worksite so that you can observe the work environment but can be done over phone or videoconference. They give you a chance to ask a professional about their career. You get firsthand information about the realities of working in a particular field or industry as well as insider tips and knowledge. A job shadow involves observing a professional as they work. Job shadows can be a few hours to several days. Both are valuable activities to research careers and build your network for future career opportunities. Neither are meant to be a job interview, and the objective is not to find job openings.

Find Industry Professionals

- Ask your current network- reach out to friends, family, instructors and other students to see if they know someone in your field of interest
- Use Career Mentoring Network in College Central
www.collegecentral.com/sierracollege
- LinkedIn, www.linkedin.com - use the professional networking site to explore profiles and connect with individuals including Sierra College alumni
- Google - search for local business organizations related to your field and professionals working in positions that interest you. Send them a friendly email.
Tip- use our sample contact script.

Sample Contact Script

"Hello, my name is _____. I am a student at Sierra College. I am calling (writing) regarding the _____ opportunity with you. I have an interest in _____. Do you have time to arrange this meeting?"

If yes: Proceed with the conversation (arrange time to meet, etc.) Be sure to ask what appropriate dress would be and get directions and parking information.

If not, ask: "When would be a good time to call back?"

Via email: You could propose a few days/times or ask them to do the same.



Sample Questions

1. How did you get started in this job?
2. What training or education did you have before beginning this job?
3. What skills, training, education, and experience are necessary to enter this field today?
4. Where is the best place to get training necessary for this field?
5. Is this industry headed in any new directions?
6. What do you see as the employment outlook for this type of job in the next five years?
7. How has your job changed since you first started working here?
8. What are your responsibilities?
9. Tell me about a typical day.
10. What is the earning potential in this field? (DO NOT ask how much the person makes!)
11. What do you LIKE about your job?
12. What is the most difficult aspect of your job?
13. What advice do you have for someone interested in training for this career?
14. As a student, what could I be doing NOW that might help me prepare for this career?
15. Is there someone else in this field you would recommend me to contact?

Write down two of your own questions before your interview!

Question #1: _____

Question #2: _____

HELPFUL TIPS:

- **Be prepared and dress professionally if you are meeting someone in-person**
- **Respect the person's time by being on time and limiting the meeting to the agreed-upon timeframe**
- **Have questions prepared**
- **Ask if you may contact them again for future questions and names of other people to meet to gain different perspectives**
- **Always send a thank you note. One of the most valuable things people can share is time.**