INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions will help you to learn about your conversation partner’s career path, and may help you make informed decisions about your own path. Your level of engagement can create a strong impression, and though you should not expect it – could open a door to a future referral or opportunity. The best way to build rapport is by showing a genuine curiosity in your conversation partner’s career path. Because most informational interviews last 15 to 30 minutes, you won’t have time to ask all of the questions. Choose the ones that are most important to you.

1. Tell me a little about your role and what that looks like on an average day?
   a. What percentage of the time do you spend on each of your various core tasks?
   b. What do you find most rewarding about your work? Most challenging?
   c. Could you share about one of your most rewarding projects to date? Most challenging projects?
   d. What are the primary skills you need to have to be successful? What character traits does someone need in order to be successful?

2. What steps have you taken in your career that helped you to arrive at your current position?
   a. As an undergrad in college, what were YOU studying? Did you know you wanted to head in this direction, or did that come later?
   b. What are some of the earliest experiences you can think of (professionally or personally) that steered you in this direction?
   c. Were there particular internships or jobs that served as stepping stones?
   d. Why did you decide to pursue (particular job/opportunity from their past)?
   e. How do you think you benefitted from that experience?

3. What is it like to work for (ORGANIZATION)?
   a. How does it fit with your career goals?
   b. What are some of your organization’s goals for the next 2-3 years?
   c. How would you describe the way that management supports the growth of its employees at this organization?
   d. How would you describe the culture there? What do people like to do for fun?
   e. What entry-level roles exist that a recent college grad might step into there?
   f. What are the most pressing needs of your org/particular unit right now?
   g. Do you foresee the organization looking to hire new talent?

4. Advice for a young professional looking to enter your area of work
   a. How would you advise someone like me to gain experience through internships or early work experiences in order to prepare for your line of work?
   b. Do you know anyone else you think I could talk to in order to gain some additional perspectives on your role, or an adjacent role in this field?
   c. Thank you so much for your time! It’s been very helpful in helping me to consider roles I might want to pursue and future career goals after graduation!

These conversations can last anywhere from 15 minutes (very short) to 45 minutes, to an hour (more relaxed pace, making it easier to build true rapport with someone). When you sense that the conversation has reached a good stopping point, it’s okay to simply thank them for their insights and
to suggest maintaining the relationship by following up again, another time. Don’t view an informational interview as a “one-and-done” event – but as a foundation to continue to build a relationship if the person is someone you’d like to stay in touch with!