



Informational Interview Questions

Begin your informational interview by briefly summarizing (preferably in 90 seconds or less) your background and explaining why you are interested in the particular field.

Try to ask open-ended questions (that is, questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer). However, keep in mind that learning to ask good questions requires research. Prepare specific questions that indicate substantive knowledge of an industry or career path, with the majority of the questions focused on topics that cannot be researched on the Internet.

About the Individual

- What would you say is the best path to this career?
- What attracted you to this industry, your company, and your job?
- What do you enjoy most about this industry, the company, and your job?
- What aspects of your career have you found most and least rewarding and why? Any regrets?
- What are your educational and career backgrounds? What would you do differently if you were starting over?
- What do you see as possible next steps for you? What career expectations do you have in the short and long term?
- What are you most excited or concerned about for this industry/company/career path in the future?
- If you were in the job market tomorrow, what would you do?

About the Job

- What are your primary responsibilities? How do you spend your time?
- How do you value/measure your results and effectiveness?
- What do you do in a typical day or week? How much time are you in meetings, on the phone, on the road, and working in teams versus working independently?

About Skills

- What skills are most critical to your success?
- What weaknesses in a person’s skill set would make him or her ineffective in this business?
- What are the most valuable skills in your job? Which experiences enabled you to develop these skills?
- How do you keep skills current? What do you read? What professional associations do you belong to? What seminars or continuing education do you consider useful?

About the Company

- What would you do differently if you ran this company?
- What are the common misconceptions about working in this company?
- What do you see as the biggest competitive challenge for your company?
- What are some of the defining characteristics of the MBAs who have been hired by your company in the past for this position?
- How many MBAs does your company typically hire each year? Can you describe the process? How many will have worked as summer interns?

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About the Industry

- What have been your biggest surprises in this field?
- What are the common misconceptions about working in this field?
- What motivates you to continue in this business? What do you like most?
- What are the vulnerabilities of this business? What worries you?
- What biases or barriers to entry does this business have in terms of hiring practices?
- What do you expect of people starting out in this field? What educational and personal qualities in candidates attract you? How do you determine a candidate's compatibility for the field, including education, personality, and cultural considerations?
- Can you recommend others I can talk to about this field?
- What are some of the ways I can become familiar with the industry jargon?

About Me

- What strengths and weaknesses do you see in my current background?
- Is there anything else you think would be helpful as I consider this field?
- Looking at my résumé, what advice would you have for me on next steps if I were interested in this industry/company/career?

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