



NETWORKING & INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Preparing You For Life After OWU!

Career
connection

OHIO WESLEYAN

owu.edu/careers

NETWORKING & WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Networking includes talking to people, making connections, and developing rapport to grow your circle of influence (whether face-to-face, by phone/ email, or through online sites like OWU Alumni Partners (<https://owu.edu/alumnipartners>) or LinkedIn).

- **It's the #1 way to find a job!** Approximately 70-80% of job seekers find jobs through networking.
- **It helps you achieve your personal & professional goals!** Ambassadors will help advocate for you by connecting you with the right people. Strong connections build confidence and demonstrate credibility.

QUICK NETWORKING TIPS

Nurture relationships – follow-up is key!

Establish connections – get out of your comfort zone and meet people.

Talk with alums – they are often eager to help students succeed!

Write thank you notes – you will remain positive in people's minds as a result.

Offer assistance – remember it is not about what you "get," but what you can offer.

Really be real – show your interest and be genuinely you!

Keep at it – continue to put yourself out there. Perseverance will get you far.

WHAT IS INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING?

An informational interview is a discovery meeting you initiate with someone who has a job, employment site, path, or background that interests you.



The Goal: Learn from someone else's experience to inform you about new options, best practices, resources, opportunities, and connections.

Informational interviews...

- Cultivate a professional relationships
- Are a highly effective networking strategy.
- Will make it easier for your contact to keep you in mind when opportunities arise within their organization or another site.

OWU ALUMNI PARTNERS

Visit owu.edu/alumnipartners & connect with alumni dedicated to being a resource and support to students.

Reach out to Alumni Partners for:

- Insight, advice, and mentorship about career path
- 1:1 mentorship
- Shadowing & internship opportunities
- Informational Interviews
- So many other valuable engagements!



REQUESTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW: KEY TIPS

- Let them know how you got their name/ why you are contacting them. **Make it clear that you are looking for information, not a job!**
- Provide background information about yourself (how you became interested in their company/ industry, any related experience you have, etc.).
- Make a request for 20-60 minutes of their time (you can determine the amount).
- Thank them in advance and tell them how you will follow up.
- Reach out to 5-10 people at a time so you hear back from 1-3.
- If no response after a week, send a brief reminder to ensure the initial request was not overlooked. If you still don't hear back, move on to another individual.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW LAYOUT

- Begin by thanking the individual for their time. Restate the objective of the discussion, the time allotment, and briefly review your background.
- Informational interviews should be casual and conversational.
- Prepare specific open-ended questions that indicate your knowledge of the industry or career path. Focus on topics that cannot be researched online.
- Listen attentively and take good notes.
- Always follow up with a thank-you note & add your contact on LinkedIn!

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

? About the Individual

- What is the best path to this career?
- What attracted you to this industry, your company, and your job?
- What aspects of your career are the most and least rewarding/ challenging and why? What would you do differently if you were starting over?
- If you were in the job market tomorrow, what would you recommend doing?

? About the Job

- What are your primary responsibilities? How do you spend your time?
- What qualities/attributes do you look for when hiring a _____?
- What are the most valuable skills in your job?
- Which experiences enabled you to develop these skills?
- How do you keep your skills current? What do you read?
- What professional associations do you belong to?
- What seminars or continuing education do you find useful?

? About the Company/ Organization

- What makes your company/organization unique?
- What do you see as the biggest competitive challenge for your company/ organization?
- What is the culture like at this company/organization?

? About the Industry

- What have been your biggest surprises in this field?
- What are the common misconceptions about working in this field?
- What are the vulnerabilities of this industry? What worries you?
- What do you expect of people starting out in this industry?
- 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?

? Feedback on your Career Search

- Are there other positions / career paths to consider based on my background and interests?
- What strengths and weaknesses do you see in my current background?
- Is there anything else that would be helpful as I consider this field?
- Looking at my resume, what advice would you have for me on next steps if I were interested in this industry/company/career?
- Who are other individuals you would recommend I reach out to?

TEMPLATES

for Reaching Out & Thank You Notes

Reaching Out: Informational Interview Request

Dear [Insert Title & First / Last Name],

My name is _____ and I am currently studying _____ at Ohio Wesleyan University. I got your contact information from [Event / Contact Source]. At Ohio Wesleyan, I am involved in _____. I also have a great interest in _____.

Since you have a background in _____, I was hoping to ask a few questions and learn more about _____ when you are available to connect. My career goals are _____, and I wish to gain more knowledge and information from you since your experience(s) and career goal(s) are in line with my own!

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing back from you soon!

Kind regards,
[First and Last Name]

Thank You Letter/Email

Send a thank you note within 24-48 hours following informational interviews. Check the letter for grammar and spelling. Emphasize the value of the information / time, note how you will incorporate their suggestions, follow up with relevant documents (resume, contacts, etc.), and mention next steps + that you will stay in touch!

Dear [Insert title and last name or first name],

I enjoyed speaking with you yesterday at the OWU Internship and Summer Job Fair and learning about the opportunities at _____. Given my strong customer service skills, coursework in marketing, and campus involvement, I'm very interested in the _____ summer internship program. As you recommended, I applied online this morning. Attached is a copy of my resume. Please let me know about the next steps. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,
Jane Bishop



@owucareers



careers@owu.edu



owu.edu/careers

Questions? Stop by Slocum 207 (M - Th from 12- 4:30pm) or make a Handshake appointment!