Career Life Education 10 Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How to Land and Ace an Informational Interview

1. Do your research:
   * Target specific people you want to speak with. Research them to find out general background information or commonalities that can help you establish a connection.
   * Research the company, job description, and career field.
   * Spend time on the company’s website, find out about their products and services.
   * Research the latest press releases so that you can discuss what’s going on with the company now. Your extensive knowledge of their company could impress the person you’re speaking with.
2. Try not to leave a message
   * If you have to, use a prepared 20-30 second ‘elevator pitch’ that mentions why you’re interested in speaking with them.
   * Make sure to leave your contact info.
   * If you speak with a secretary who turns you down, ask when would be a good time to call back. Make sure you follow up.
3. Learn to handle objections:
   * If the person says “no” to an interview, try someone else in that department or company. Not everyone will have the time or desire to speak with you so be prepared for some rejection.
   * Remember it’s a numbers game. The more people you contact, the more likely you will be successful in landing an interview.
4. First impressions count:
   * Dress to impress. All the same rules apply for an informational interview regarding dress, composure and attitude, as they do for a job interview.
   * Be professional, polite, honest and courteous.
   * Don’t be nervous. You shouldn’t be, since this interview is not for a job. Relax, be yourself. Remember you are asking the questions, not the other way around.
5. Be prepared:
   * Have a game plan. Make sure your questions are well-prepared and you have all the necessary tools with you (pens, notebook, business card, etc.).
   * Bring a copy of your resume just in case. Only give this to the person if you are asked for it.
   * Practice, practice, practice! The more you practice your questions, the more professional you will sound and concise you will be during the interview. Not to mention the more confidence you will exude.
6. Take notes:
   * Make sure you ask your interviewee if it’s ok that you write down some notes while they are speaking.
   * Don’t worry about copying every single word down. Focus on only capturing the important information.
   * Don’t interrupt the person so you can catch up with your note taking. If need be, repeat back what they have said to give yourself a few extra seconds to get caught up.
7. Express your gratitude early on:
   * Be thankful. You are asking someone for their time and information, so start by thanking them earnestly for it.
8. Post Interview:
   * Write out an outline of your conversation and what the person said, as soon as possible after the interview. That way everything will still be fresh in your mind.
   * Write and send out a thank you note within 24 hours of your interview. Again, express your gratitude for taking the time to speak with you.
   * Reflect. Really think about the information you have received and how this will influence your future decisions.
   * Keep your interviewee informed of your progress. By meeting with you, they’ve invested time in you and they want to see you be successful. Keep them in the loop by e-mailing the interviewee after you’ve met. This is also a way to ensure this person remains in your professional network.