**Informational Interview**

**Definition:** A meeting between a job seeker and someone working in a career field for the purposes of learning about an occupation, discovering whether more training or experience is needed, how one might get future job leads, and networking within an industry.

An informational interview is an essential step in the career search process. In addition to providing jobseekers an opportunity to learn more about a career field, it enables them to build a network of contacts within that field.

**1 out of every 12 informational interviews results in a job offer.** This is a remarkable number considering the fact that **only one in every 200 resumes results in a job offer.** Also, **80% of jobs today are NOT advertised**. Thus the informational interview can help a jobseeker gain insight into the hidden job market.

**Benefits of Informational Interviews**

* Learn more about a career and the skills required to succeed.
* Grow your network of contacts by receiving referrals to other professionals in your field of interest.
* Clarify your own goals as you explore different career paths.
* Uncover the hidden job market: up to 80% of all jobs are never advertised.
* Develop confidence and gain practice for real job interviews. Informational interviews tend to be less stressful than job interviews.
* Evaluate whether the career is compatible with your skills, interests, values, personality, lifestyle, and goals.
* Get the most up-to-date career information.
* Gain insight on needs and opportunities in your career field.

For all of these reasons and many more, an informational interview should be treated as an integral part of your networking and job-hunting plans. That being said, it’s important to note that an informational interview is not the same as a job interview.

**Informational Interview vs. Job Interview**

An informational interview is not the same as a job interview. Because you are not interviewing for a job, and you are the one who gets to ask the questions, an informational interview is less stressful than a real interview. Even though there may not be an actual job opening, the informational interview is a great opportunity to practice for the real thing. The process can help you build the necessary confidence required for a job interview.