

# Conducting an Informational Interview

An informational interview is an arranged meeting or phone call with someone who works in an industry or company you are interested in. It can help you gather specific information about a job, industry, or company. Remember that you are not asking for a job.

## Setting Up an Informational Interview

Before you contact someone, establish your objective. What is it you hope to gain? Who do you want to interview and why? Once you have an idea of your goal, determine who you want to contact. You can find alumni or other industry professionals to connect with through:

### Quick Connections on SJSU<sup>2</sup> Mentoring & Meetups

Quick Connections is a way to engage with alumni or other professionals for a one-time career conversation which also known as an informational interview. All alumni or other professionals on this platform have voluntarily signed up to mentor Spartans.

Here is how to access:

1. Go to <https://sjsu2.peoplegrove.com/>
2. Login using your SSO and complete your profile
3. Select the *Quick Connections* tab
4. Search for alumni/professionals by using the filters or search bar
5. Look at their profile and click on “Let’s Connect” and send a message (email) or request a meeting (online video chat, phone, or in-person)

### Alumni Tool on LinkedIn

1. Go to <https://linkedin.com/alumni>
2. Login using your LinkedIn email and password
3. Select the *Alumni* tab on the left once on the San Jose State University landing page
4. Use the search bar and type in keywords such as job title, organization

When introducing yourself in the message that you send using Quick Connections on SJSU<sup>2</sup> or LinkedIn, clearly state your objective, for example:

“Hi, my name is Sammy Spartan. I’m currently a \_\_\_\_\_(class year) at SJSU studying \_\_\_\_\_(major/degree), and noticed on \_\_\_\_\_(Quick Connections on SJSU<sup>2</sup> or LinkedIn) that you were a recent alum of the program. I would love to meet you in-person or chat over the phone/online for a quick 20-30 minute conversation to ask you some questions about how you got to where you are. Hope to hear from you soon, and thank you for your time!”

Keep in mind that you are interacting in a professional capacity with someone who might be a future colleague or boss. See [The Muse](#) for tips on professional communication etiquette.

## Preparing for an Informational Interview

Prepare questions ahead of time before meeting or calling the person. Below are some suggested questions:

- How did you get into your career?
- How did you get into this organization/industry?
- What is a typical day like?
- What do you like most about your job?
- What are the key skills that one needs to be successful in the field?
- What was the biggest challenge you had when transitioning from college to the world of work?
- Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to students to prepare for the workforce?
- What professional organizations or resources would be helpful for me to know?

On the day of the meeting, dress professionally and be on time. Close the meeting by thanking them for their time. You may also ask a question such as, “Do you know of any current opportunities in the field?” to let the person know that you are currently looking for opportunities. This may lead to a referral; however, do not assume that the person will give you one. Be sure to follow up with a thank you note or email. If the alum/professional suggests tasks for you to work on or complete, keep them updated on your progress.