



NETWORKING & INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Preparing You For Life After OWU!

Career
connection

OHIO WESLEYAN

owu.edu/careers

Why is Networking So Important?

Networking is the #1 way to find a job!

Approximately 70-80% of job seekers find jobs through networking. Networking can occur face-to-face, by phone or email, or through online sites such as the OWU Alumni Partners Program (<https://owu.edu/alumnipartners>) or LinkedIn.

Networking can help you achieve your professional and personal goals!

By networking, you create ambassadors who will advocate for you and help connect you with the right people. These connections also help build your confidence and demonstrate your credibility.



Quick Tips on Networking

Networking in its purest form is simply talking to people, making connections and developing rapport to grow your circle of influence. Being successful requires a serious commitment of time and energy. Keep in mind the following tips for successful networking:

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.

An informational interview is a great way to start career exploration and build professional relationships. It's an effective networking strategy that can help you stay top-of-mind for future career opportunities.

OWU Alumni Partners

Visit owu.edu/alumni-partners & connect with alumni dedicated to being a resource and support for YOU.

Reach out to Alumni Partners for:

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



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The Columbus Foundation

Vice President
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SHONDRA E. WYGAL '94

AARP

Associate State Director
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YAN DONG '11

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Senior Research Scientist
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Requesting an Informational Interview

Once you have identified contacts, send these individuals a request for an informational interview via email, LinkedIn, or the OWU Alumni Partners Program. Include your request in the body of the message. Do *not* attach a résumé in your initial email. If you are using LinkedIn, be sure to use a 2-phase approach:

- 1). Send a short welcome message and ask to connect.
- 2). Follow up by thanking the individual for connecting with you, and then provide the days/times that you would be available to conduct an informational interview in the coming week(s).

The more detail you can provide in your initial outreach, the better! This way you can avoid going back and forth.

- 3). Schedule your meeting, and come prepared with questions (see our list of questions in this guide).

The Structure of Your Message

- Let them know how you got their name and why you are contacting them. **Make it clear that you are looking for information, not a job! *This is important.**
- Provide some background information about yourself, such as how you became interested in their company or industry and any related experience you have.
- Make your request and ask for 20-60 minutes of their time (you can determine the amount).

Thank them in advance and tell them how you will follow up.

If you do not get a response after a week, then you will want to send a brief reminder message to make sure they did not overlook your initial request. If you still do not hear back from the person, move on to another individual.

We recommend reaching out to 5-10 people at a time so you hear back from 1-3.

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!

TEMPLATES

for Outreach & Follow-up

Reaching Out: Informational Interview Request

Subject Line: Informational Interview Request or [Event Name] Follow-Up

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]

Sample Letter/Email

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

I enjoyed speaking with you yesterday on Zoom and learning about the opportunities at _____. I really appreciate you taking the time to share your insight and advice for me as I'm looking to pursue _____.

As requested, I have attached my resume to this email, and I look forward to staying in touch as I navigate the next steps on my journey.

Sincerely,
Jane Bishop

To learn more about Career Connection's resources, stop by Slocum 207 or make an appointment online using Handshake! Check out our [Career Resource Hub](https://careers.owu.edu/) at <https://careers.owu.edu/> for access to many other resources including the Career Community Resources, OWU Alumni Partners Program, Candid Career, and more!



@OWUCareers



Ohio Wesleyan University



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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 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 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 résumé, 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?