

Questions to Ask During Networking Meetings

Knowing what to say during an informational interview is crucial to your success. Choose those questions that are appropriate for your situation and speaking style, and don't try to squeeze in too many questions into the time you have available.

Career Paths

Describe your career path. How did each job lead you to your next position?

How/why did you decide to pursue the career in which you are working?

What was your undergraduate major? How did it help prepare you for your career? What additional training/education have you had?

What are related jobs and industries which I might explore? If you made a career change, what other fields would you consider?

Where can someone in an entry-level position expect to be in two years? Five years? Ten years?

What is the employment outlook in your field? Describe new developments.

How has your work affected your lifestyle?

What Work is Like

Could you describe a typical workday for me?

What skills are required in your position on a day-to-day basis?

What parts of your job do you find most challenging?

Despite these challenges, what motivates you to remain? What do you find most enjoyable?

Are there any dangers I should be aware of?

How often do you work past 6pm on weekends?

Which seasons of the year are toughest in your job?

I'd like to walk through and see with my own eyes where the work is done here. Can that be arranged?

Job Responsibilities

Describe your responsibilities.

How do you spend a typical workday – yesterday for example? How much time do you spend with people? Data? Things?

Describe your work environment.

What are the titles and responsibilities of others with whom you work?

State of the Industry

Is this field growing enough that there's room for someone like me?

Are too many or too few people entering this profession?

What developments on the horizon could affect future opportunities?

This industry has changed dramatically in the past five years. What have you seen from inside your company?

How frequently do layoffs occur? How does it affect morale of employees?

Why do people leave this field or company?

Who are the most important people in the industry today?

Which companies have the best track record for promoting women and minorities?

Are there opportunities for self-employment in your field? Where?

Money and Advancement

What would be my earning potential if I entered this field?

To get promotions, is job-hopping necessary?

How did you get your job?

If you could start all over again, would you change your career path in any way? Why?

How long does it take for managers to rise to the top?

What is the background of most senior-level executives?

Education and Experience

What educational preparation would you recommend for someone who wants to advance in this field?

What qualifications do you seek in a new hire?

How do most people enter this profession?

Which of my skills are strong compared to other job hunters in this field?

What do you think of the experience I've had so far? For what types of positions would it qualify me?

What do you think of my resume? How do you suggest I change it?

Can you recommend any course I should take before furthering my job search?

What companies might be interested in hiring someone with my qualifications?

Fitting in

Considering my background, how well do you think I would fit in with this company and/or profession?

How does your company compare with others we've discussed?

Would the work involve any lifestyle changes, such as frequent travel or late-night business entertaining?

Considering all the people you've met in your line of work, what personal attributes are essential for success?

Based on my skills, education and experience, what other careers would you suggest I explore before making a final decision?

Career Preparation

What abilities are important for success and enjoyment in your field? What values are important?

What personality traits are important?

What do you like most/least about your job? About your field?

How can students find summer jobs or internships in your field? Are there other means of gaining experience before graduation?

If you could do anything differently, what would you change about your career?

What advice do you have for students who are preparing to enter your field?

What starting salaries/salary advancements can one expect?

Is a graduate degree important? If so, what fields of study are helpful?

Can you recommend sources for more information (specific books, trade publications, professional journals)?

Do you know of other professionals with whom I might speak for more information about this field?

More Information

Where can I write to get up-to-date information on salaries, employers and industry issues?

What professional journals and organizations should I be aware of?

Does your organization have a website where I can find more information?

Is there anything else you think I need to know?

What other people would you recommend I speak with? When I call, may I use your name?