



NETWORKING: OCCUPATIONAL INQUIRY VISITS

You conduct this type of networking to gain information about a particular occupation or industry, but not to specifically ask about employment or employment leads. You will be talking with people who are working in your field or position of interest. Here are the steps:

1. Research the occupation thoroughly online first.
2. Create **customized questions based on your self-assessment results and your Descriptors List, which will allow you to maximize your time with the person and the outcome of the visit.** Ideally, work with a career advisor to formulate your questions.
3. Make a networking list of people you know and include social media contacts (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc...).
4. Alert people on your networking list that you are gathering information about an occupation; do they know anyone in that field who may be willing to talk with you for 20-30 minutes about the occupation? (see sample outreach email)
5. Follow up with all leads via email; introduce yourself and mention who recommended them. **In your email, type “Referral from (include mutual contact’s name)” in the subject line.** Explain you are doing some career research, mention the mutual contact who referred you and explain that you would like to meet with her/him for about 20-30 minutes to learn about the occupation. You may meet via a videoconferencing platform or, ideally, in person, when that option is feasible.
6. Research your leads (LinkedIn, company website, etc...).
7. Meet with your leads, ideally in person, but currently via videoconference. When meeting in person, **DO NOT** take a resume; instead **take two hard copies of your questions, which includes one for yourself and one for the person with whom you are visiting. However, you may email your questions, if you are meeting via videoconference; email the questions directly prior to or at the beginning of your visit, but not in advance, as this may be confusing.**
8. Dress business casual for your meeting. If meeting in person, before you leave, request the person’s business card. **As you end the meeting, make sure to ask for a referral to another person in that occupation.** It is important to have more than one data point with this research. A minimum of three visits per occupation is recommended.
7. When possible send a handwritten thank you note; when not possible, send a thank you email.
8. Afterwards, write a journal entry about your experience, including any details you want to remember, such as small talk and general impressions about the person and company. Ask yourself:
 - What did I learn? Are there alternative entry points?
 - Why is this person successful?
 - What did I like about the job?
 - What did not appeal to me?
 - Do I need to get more information?
9. Follow up with all leads and watch your network grow.
10. When you follow up with a lead, contact the original person who recommended the lead, thank them a second time, and let them know you followed through and the impact of the visits. You are building important relationships and possible future job leads.