The Informational Interview

Before the phone call
Do your homework. Be sure to thoroughly research the company before you go.

Setting an appointment over the phone
It’s a good idea to practice and rehearse what you will say to someone you’d like to interview. In doing so, you should feel more confident and relaxed when speaking to your contact.
Consider creating a script like the one below.

Hello ________________,
My name is _______________ and I am a student at Blackburn College. I’m starting to conduct my job search and _____(NAME)_________ suggested that I give you a call.***Did I catch you at a good time? Would you have a second to answer a few questions? Thank you.

As I mentioned earlier, I’m starting my job search and trying to build my network. I’m very interested in the __Industry/Field__ and I was hoping that we could meet sometime to talk. I’d really like to learn more about your career path and I’d appreciate any information you could share.

I know that you are very busy but is there any time when we could get together for a short time?
NOTE: Be sure you don’t ask for a specific day and time. Make sure that your contact understands that you will meet at a time that is convenient for them.

***I got your name from the article I read in _____________
***You spoke at a convention I attended

The Follow-Up from the phone conversation
Be sure to follow-up after the interview. After all, the contact person was gracious enough to volunteer their time and information. Immediately after the interview:

• Review your notes
• Contact your new leads
• Read suggested material
• Send a thank-you note
• Send your resume, if appropriate
• Arrange another meeting in the future, if appropriate
• If you find an interesting and applicable item (announcement, newspaper article, website, etc.), send it to your contact.
• Report back to your contact regarding any leads given during the interview. Relate what happened and express your appreciation again.
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Questions to ask

Tell me about your educational background.

Tell me about your work experience.

What are your responsibilities?

What advice do you have for someone trying to enter your field?

What are some of the changes you’ve seen over the years?

What are some current trends in ______ Field/ Industry ______?

What do you like most about what you do and what would you change if you could?

What does a typical career path look like in your field?

What professional associations would you recommend?

What do you read to keep up with current trends and development in your field?

What skills are most important in your position?

How would you describe your work environment?

How has your job affected your lifestyle?

In what ways is your occupation changing?

How much flexibility do you have in creating your goals?

What projects have you worked on that have been particularly interesting?

Are there any social obligations that go along with your position?

To what extent does this job present a challenge in terms of juggling work and family life?