

# Informational Interviews



**PRESENTED BY  
MELISSA ROSEWALL AND CASSY DAVIS  
EMPLOYMENT CONSULTANTS**

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS  
BLOOMINGTON, MN**

**MINNESOTA EMPLOYMENT TRAINING AND TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE CENTER (MNTAT)**

# Why Informational Interviews?



- **Help refine themes**
- **Reveal Skills and Tasks found in workplaces**
- **Reveal Conditions of Employment**
- **Keep you thinking in different ways**
- **Warm up to Job Development**

# The Transition from DPG to Job Development

Final Vocational Themes Formulation  
Informational Interviews...



Discovering  
Personal  
Genius

Formal Job  
Development



Work Trials

Unsolicited Employment Offers...

Griffin-Hammis Associates

# Informational Interview Set Up



- **Should have list of 20 ready**
- **Contacting the business**
  - Should have some background on the company (i.e. lookup their website, if they have an HR dept., small, family owned, etc.)
  - **Method of Contact**
    - ✦ **Phone call vs. email vs. dropping in**
  - **Who to ask for**
  - **Keep it casual!**

# Contacting the Business



- **Phone calls**
  - Ask for manager or owner
  - “Could you direct me to the proper person....?”
  - Keep it casual, try not to ramble on
  - Dependent on the job seeker:
    - If they will come with on the informational interview
    - Are they a recent graduate?
    - Disclosure about his/her disability
    - Their work history
    - Strong interest in fashion display, woodworking, puppets, etc.

# Phone Calls, cont'd



- Ask for 15-20 minutes of his or her time
  - They usually end up lasting an hour to an hour and half
- Ask for advice
- Not looking for a job
- Play 'dumb'
  - “I am a complete novice when it comes to Weaponry and we could really use some advice from an **expert.**” \*

# Language Do's



- “Job seeker” or “recent grad”
- Focus on strengths, interests, skills
- Remind the employer that **he or she** is the expert
- An old phone-sales trick: Smile while on the phone; it will make you sound more friendly
- Set a specific time to meet

# Language Don'ts



- **Avoid the following words**
  - ✦ “Client”
  - ✦ “Consumer”
  - ✦ “Participant”
  - ✦ “Autistic” or defining a person by their disability
  - ✦ “Low” vs. “High” functioning
  - ✦ Job developer/job coach
  - ✦ Any Human Services jargon (i.e. acronyms)
  - ✦ Avoid sales spiel

# Examples: no right or wrong way



## Sending emails to companies

### ★ Tips:

- HR vs. finding a specific person
- Ask to be directed to certain individual (Info@companyx.com)
- Disclose your company name/title ?
- Some very small artisan businesses may not check emails often
- Again, keep it casual
- Ask for advice
- We have had several occasions where the employer will ask what his or her limitations are and/or what's *wrong* with him or her?
- Be honest, shouldn't be a surprise

# Email example



Hi,

My name is Cassy Davis and I am an Employment Consultant working in the Twin Cities area. I am attempting to gather information on local businesses, particularly businesses in the field of

\_\_\_\_\_.

I am by no means an expert so I am looking to meet with you for 15 minutes just to ask you some questions about what you do and what you did to find a position in your field.

I'd love to have the opportunity to meet with you at your business. I am available to meet almost any time this week.

Thank you for your time,

# Email Example



Hello,

My name is Cassy Davis and I am an Employment Consultant working in the Twin Cities area. I work with Marie Johnson, a woman with a strong interest in meeting and socializing with new people. She also enjoys helping and assisting others and is fascinated by all types of smells. Marie utilizes her skills by volunteering at places such as the Hennepin County Medical Center and for Feed My Starving Children.

I am wondering if I could meet with you (or anyone else) at your company for 15-20 minutes this week to discuss your business, background, and to receive any advice you may have for Marie as she looks to obtain meaningful part-time employment.

Feel free to contact me by either e-mail or phone.

Sincerely,

## Email example



Hi Julie,

My name is Melissa Rosewall and I am working with a soon-to-be graduate named Josh Deany. We had recently met with the manager of Clutch Hitters and he gave me your information and thought you could be of help. Josh is looking for some advice on how to be a hitting coach or where to start in the sports field. I am a novice at softball/baseball stuff and would greatly appreciate a 15-20 min meeting to discuss your work history. Please let me know if you could be of help. Thanks!

# The Informational Interview



- Once the informational interview has been set up
- Prepare
  - Yourself -dress
  - Job seeker
  - Try not to confuse the individual (or his or her team) with a typical 'interview'
  - Practice, prepare questions
  - Low pressure! Only looking for advice!
  - The culture?? Steel Mill vs. an accounting firm

# The Informational Interview, Cont'd



- Smooth listening
- Don't talk about yourself or your own stories
- Asking open-ended questions
  - “How did you end up here?”
  - “Tell us about yourself/your business”
  - “What type of advice might you have for someone like Marie who is trying to start out in this field?”
  - Has any recent technology effected your business?
  - What do you look for in an employee and how do you find them?
  - Etc.

# During the Informational Interviews



- Take notes throughout the entire conversation
- Leads, leads, leads!
- Get names, phone numbers, email addresses
- Ask for advice and listen
- Follow through
- Fluid list of 20

# After the Informational Interview

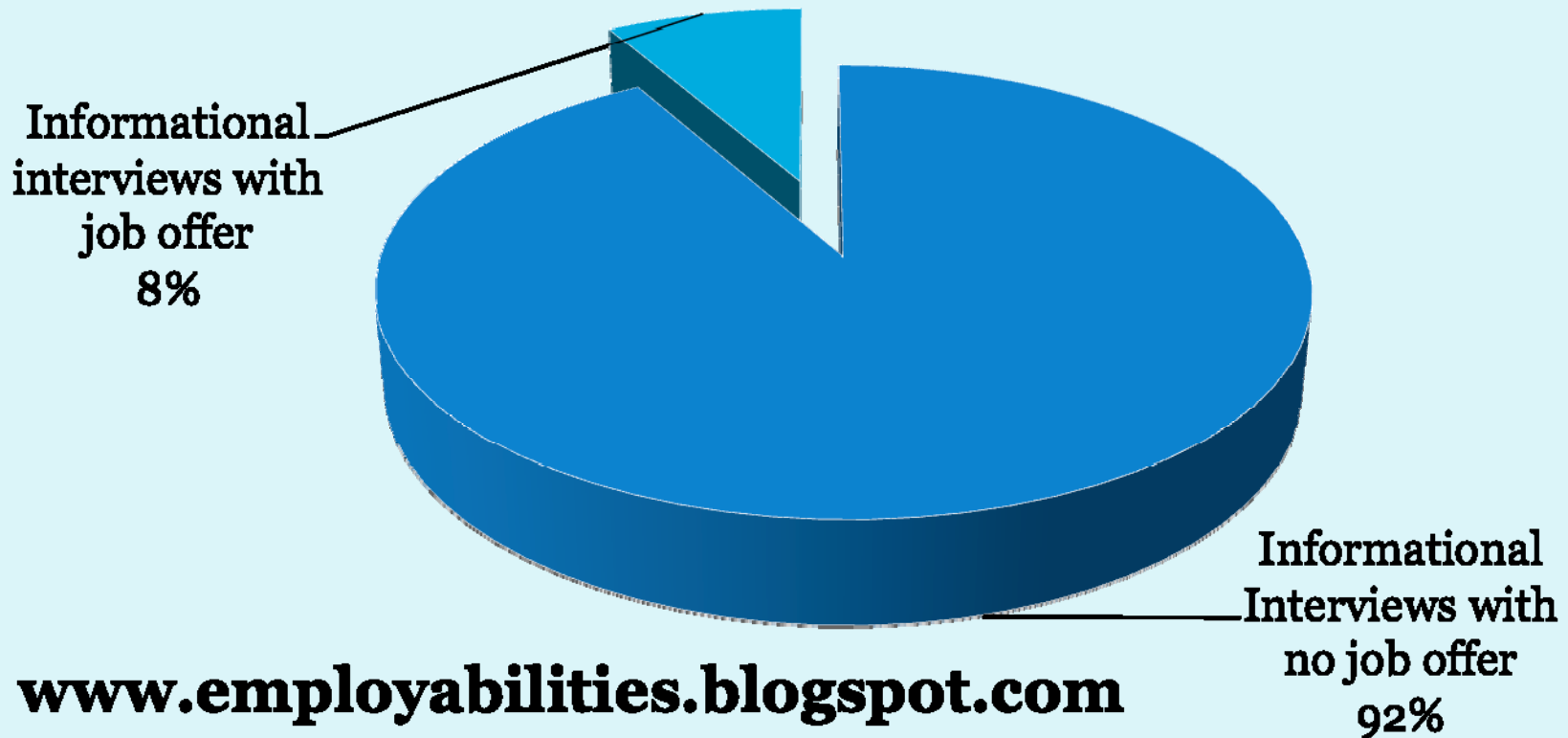


- **Thank you**
- **Follow up**
- **Update list of 20, ideal conditions of employment, contacts list**
- **Pick up the phone**

# Rejection is Okay!



## % of Jobs Offered at Informational Interviews



[www.employabilities.blogspot.com](http://www.employabilities.blogspot.com)

# Thank you!



Cassy Davis and Melissa Rosewall

[dcassandra@cipmn.org](mailto:dcassandra@cipmn.org)

[mrosewall@cipmn.org](mailto:mrosewall@cipmn.org)

Minnesota Employment Training and Technical  
Assistance Center

[www.mntat.org](http://www.mntat.org)