

## *The Information Interview*

This is old school, but it still works. Done correctly it can become integral to your overall job search strategy. Make it part of your WoW! (world of work – see the “Career Planning Guide” at: [http://www.ocad.ca/students/career\\_services/career\\_planning\\_guide.htm](http://www.ocad.ca/students/career_services/career_planning_guide.htm)) research. It will lead to the expansion of your names and contact information in your Network Map, and help you revise and refine your professional infomercial.

Consider, too, using informational interview techniques with your on-line, social network contacts.

In its simplest form, an information interview is talking with some knowledgeable and experienced person within the sector or occupation in which you have interest. It is not about finding a job. The script might go something like this:

*Hello. Yes, I'm calling because I am hoping you will be willing to meet with me to talk about the world of museum curation. I am not, at this time, looking for any kind of a job. I am currently studying at OCAD University and would simply like to learn more about the field. I know that you have had a profound influence on the art-cultural sector in this area, and I would love to hear about your experience and background. I have drafted a few questions beforehand, which I would be willing to send ahead of time. I would not take up more than twenty or thirty minutes of your time.*

*Would next Wednesday, around 10:00 in the morning be good for you?*

Be sure to do your research. Find out as much about the company and the person you are going to meet with as you possibly can. Take notes and draft some questions you would like to ask. These may include:

- 1/ How did you get started in your field?
- 2/ What do you enjoy most about your job?
- 3/ What do you enjoy least about your job?
- 4/ Can you talk about a typical day?
- 5/ What preparation – skills, training, education – are needed in your field?
- 6/ What advice would you give to someone like myself looking for opportunities in this industry/company?

In the social network environment this works a little differently. Many will tell you that social networking – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogging – will reveal a whole hidden job market. This is simply not true. There is no reason any company or person of influence is going to go looking for your web presence. The trick is to identify those companies and persons that are of interest to you. Follow their blogs, twits, and Facebook. They will often ask directly when looking for talent.

Be sure to thank anyone kind enough to grant you an audience. Follow up the interview with an email of acknowledgement and thanks. Work the contacts. Find ways to stay in touch. Let them know from time to time what you have been up to. Not in a pestering way, but in a grateful, sincere, and genuine way. Keep them interested by staying interested in them.

Keep notes like a good salesperson. If they have special interests, check them out. Send them any helpful information you might find.

And always keep it professional.