

Networking/Searching/Informational Interviewing Exercise in Three Parts.

PART ONE: Instructions

This exercise can be done in a number of ways, but the basic idea is that it recognizes that while a general search via the web these days will produce jobs all over the country and/or world, most job hunts are local to where people know they have family/lodging and support networks (or somewhere they have always wanted to work). It is designed to help them work through the basic kinds of research they need to do, to write a more effective cover letter, ask for an informational interview and improve their interview performance.

The sites used in this activity also have contains important background information on jobs/salaries/markets and trends in their field which is useful in setting expectations (and negotiations if they get that far).

Most students also don't understand that, while it was all right as a student to just take any job once they have their degree, they need to aim high and out of the box or they may spend more time than they want getting out of that low-paying position.

PART ONE: You know the place – now you need the job!

Provide a basic introduction to the news/job sources in the place they want to go.

PART TWO: Find out more about the job BEFORE you apply/go to that interview

Learning how to look at different websites for the key facts that will help them connect their experience to the job and be more effective in applying/asking for an informational interview/interviewing itself.

PART THREE: Finding companies and organizations in a specific area

Looking at portal/hub resources and how they can be useful in making connections.

This assignment is usually done with all three components together in a computer lab over the course of a two-hour session. The students talk about where they want to go and why (family/relationship/someone to stay with while they look), and we then look at how realistic that location might be for the job they want via the various sites. We also talk through the different databases and then they are given time to fill in the answers to the various questions on their own (while faculty walk the room to answer questions).

Note: This can be combined with an assignment for a 'tracking system' so they have some way to keep track of the information they find, deadlines, the dates they make contact, dates for planned follow-up, and/or an assignment for an informational interview.

PART TWO: Find out more about the job BEFORE you apply/go to that interview

The goal of this activity is to search for more detailed information on a job advertisement or company you have found so you can write a better cover letter and ask better questions at your interview. In the Information Age, there is no excuse for not doing your research!

- 1) Choose an employer you are interested in and go to their website. List 3 facts you could discuss with the employer in a telephone conversation or an interview. This might include their mission, a new program, or how many people they serve a year. Their annual report, a 'press room' or publications page, and even the bios of senior staff and the external links page are all good places to get an overview and a sense of any organization.

Job title:

Fact 1:

Fact 2:

Fact 3:

Turn one of these facts into a 'strong' question for the interview:

- 2) Look up the job title on the Occupational Information Network (O*Net): <https://www.onetonline.org/> or the Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/>. These resources allow you to pull up national statistics/information about almost any job, so search your choice(s) and answer these questions:

- What is the salary range for this job?
- What skills are necessary?
- What is the national job outlook for this kind of position? (are employees in high or low demand based on the outlook?)

(If you can't find a specific title or the job is in another country, see if you can reword it or generalize it OR explain why you think you can't find it and how you might investigate this in other places)

- 3) Find an alternate source of information on the web: **get one piece of info from any of the options below and write it below the research option you chose (a, b, or c)**. Not all of them will be available in every area for every job, but this is a good starting place for researching a company. Write down some of the info you find:
- a) LinkedIn – If you have a LinkedIn account, look for connections or groups on LinkedIn with that company (if you don't have one, make it a goal to attend one of the workshops this semester or peruse the site to make one. They have tutorials.)

 - b) Look in LOCAL papers online for a news /business article *about* or involving the company and summarize what you find:

 - c) Google the company for forums linked to it: shareholder sites, investor boards, articles, discussions, etc. You may also check rants on Craigslist, Yelp Reviews, Facebook Places, etc, but be sure to consider where you found them when you think about their credibility.

PART THREE: Finding Companies and Organizations in a specific area

The goal of this exercise is to learn how to find companies in a specific geographic area. The first approach is specific to California, but the other should work nationwide. If you are looking in another country, see what you can find and explain how you went about it.

- 1) Employment Development Department - for this question, make sure you have a city or county in California in mind. Go to this site and look up a type of employer.

General Info on CA labor Market: <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/>

Look up local employers on EDD's site here: <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/majorer/MajorER.asp>

There are a couple ways to use this page. One, pick a county and will give you a list of some of the major employers. The other way is to click on the bottom of the window where it says search for employers by name, industry, or occupation.

As an example click on occupation; then select Humboldt County on the next page and hit search. Type in Accounting as a keyword, then click search. Next, select Bookkeeping, accounting and auditing clerks. The resulting chart is full of hyperlinks to lists of employers in Humboldt County in each of the listed industries that employ bookkeepers and account clerks.

Now follow this exercise for a city of your choice in CA and look up a different type of position. **Write down the names of 2 companies that employ a type of position you are looking for.** *If you don't find any, try a different county or a different position.*

a.

b.

- 2) The Chamber of Commerce in your city of choice (there is an American Chamber of Commerce in many/most countries in the world, and they are also a good place for this kind of research - especially as American companies often want to hire Americans and the expats in these places are a good network).

Google the name of your city and Chamber of Commerce, i.e. "Arcata, CA Chamber of Commerce" or "American Chamber of Commerce – Paris." Navigate through to find their business directory; it will be a little different for every Chamber. Now browse the directory for companies or organizations. Generally you can filter the list of companies by industry, and you'll almost always find contact info and a link to each company's website.

Write down the name of 2 companies/orgs you found on the directory that look interesting. *This is a great way to get a sense of an area's industries and company names. If you call them and tell them you found them at the Chamber of Commerce site and wanted information on their company regarding possible future employment, it can be a great door opener, because they use that site for networking purposes!*

a. Company/Org 1:

b. Company/Org 2:

3) Write down 2 Non-profits, NGOs, International Organizations, or think-tanks relevant to your area of interest. Find a job you like the look of on their sites, and record the qualifications they listed.

a. Org/Job 1:

Qualifications:

b. Org/Job 2:

Qualifications:

Choose one of the jobs you found and get the basic information you need for your contact/follow up file: email, phone number, website url, and a potential name of a person to contact (including title), e.g. Susan Smith, Head of HR.

Contact information:

Additional Note: Another good resource is the 211 Database - or service referral hotlines. Most major areas have them and they are connected with government funding and United Way. They provide information on services and their database is almost always searchable, making them a gold mine for non-profit agencies. Orange County and Bakersfield are the only ones so far that have not been available to search. *For example: Google "211 San Francisco." You'll generally find the 211 for that area listed: in this case it is "211 Bay Area." Follow the link and then pick an area. The "Find Help" button in this case is the link to their database. You now can search their database for various non-profit and government services.*