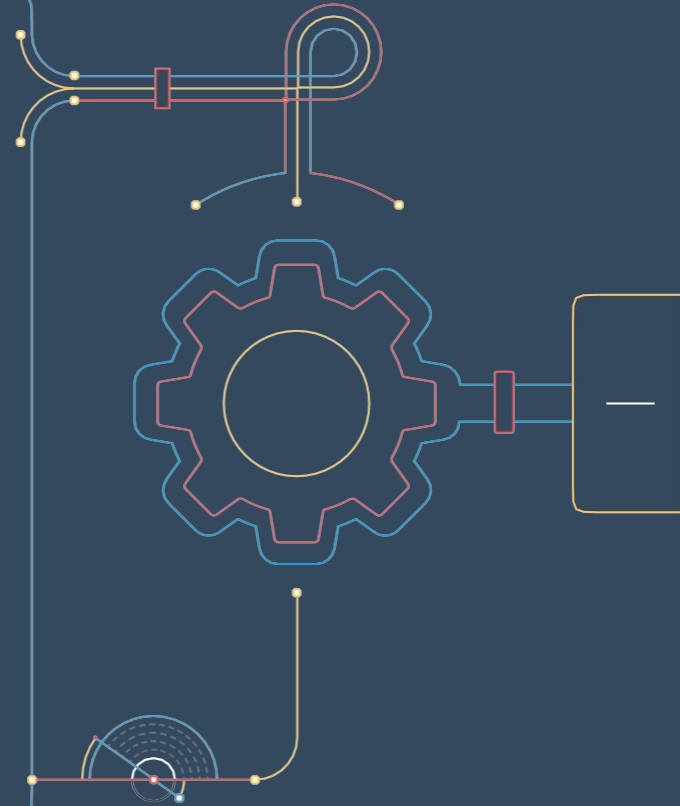




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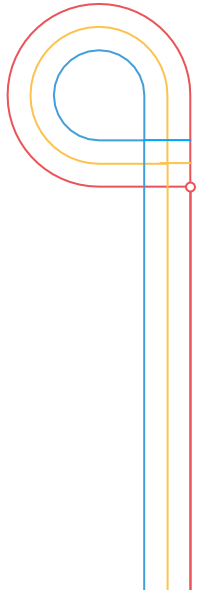
Designing Your Career Workshop: Networking & Informational Interviews in a Remote World



Introductions



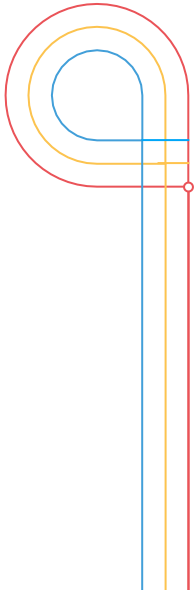
Lauren Pizer



Today's goal:

Equip you with the skills and confidence to successfully conduct **informational interviews**, one of the most popular forms of networking.

Between 50-80% of jobs are filled through networking.





Agenda

1. What is an informational interview?
2. Steps in the process
3. Addressing rejection
4. Q&A

What is an Informational Interview?



A 20 minute conversation with a professional to learn about their role, journey, and any advice they may have for someone with your career goals. It's a rapid "test" to gather data on a role, industry or company.

What is an Informational Interview?

- What is your day to day like?
- How did you get into that kind of role?
- What's it like to work at your company?
- What advice do you have for someone like me?

What an Informational Interview is NOT

A conversation where you ask for a job

Instead, it's an opportunity to:

- **Build relationships** with people. They may think of you when job opportunities cross their desk in the future
- **Create a “network” of people** you can go back to throughout your career for advice
- **Help others!** They may reach out to you for help down the road

According to one report, 1 in every 12 informational interviews resulted in a job offer

Another way to look at it...

I'm a little lost. Can you tell me about the data analytics space?

Yes! I live in that space and can tell you all about it.



Recap



- Informational interviews are all about **LEARNING & GETTING CURIOUS** about someone else. They're **NOT about asking for a job** (though they may lead to a job at some point in the future!)
- Opportunity to get data on **what you DO want**, as well as **what you DON'T want** in a role, industry or company
- They are a way to **expand the number of people in your network** that you can go back to throughout your career
- It's totally normal for this to feel scary. You're asking a stranger for help. But, **professionals (who are available) generally like to be helpful**



Steps by Step Process: Informational Interviews

1. **Identify** people to contact
2. **Research** the person
3. **Compose** an email
4. **Prepare** for the interview
5. **Follow up** ASAP and over time



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Strategies for Identifying People to Interview

People that hold a **job** you're interested in getting:

- Former coworkers or managers
- Old classmates
- Friends of friends
- LinkedIn connections (even Facebook connections!)
- People that close friends are connected to on LinkedIn
- People you've met at industry events or conferences
- LinkedIn Search: Type in the role you're looking for (i.e data analyst) into LinkedIn and see what people results come up (you can filter by region etc)

People that work in an **industry or company** you want to learn more about:

- Identify people at companies you admire:
 - Look up the company's profile on LinkedIn. This page will have employees listed
 - Go to the company's website and find the "team" page (if they have one)



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Step 2: Research the person

Places to Look: LinkedIn, Twitter, Medium, Quora, Personal sites (google them!)

Role: Job responsibilities, Company, Tenure (length of stay)

Education: Colleges / Degrees, Certifications

Job Transitions: Between....

- Roles
- Industries
- Promotions
- Geographies

Things in Common:

- Mutual connections, shared interests, mutual groups, hometown

Your goal is to get a sense of WHO this person is and what their career has been like...

You'll use this information to compose an email to them that stands out (step 3)



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Step 3: Compose an email

Compose a thoughtful email (or LinkedIn message) requesting their time that a) gets their attention and b) conveys what you want help with

Bad Email/LinkedIn Message: Don't send this!



Subject: Help - Please Talk to Me!

Hi there,

As part of a research project on a possible career in data analysis, I'm actively reaching out to successful professionals to answer the following questions:

- Can I get into a data analyze job with minimum experience?
- What is the median salary for a data analyst?
- Is the career stable or cutthroat?
- Do you get exposure to high level people like the CEO and leadership?

I'm also looking for a job and hoping to learn more about any openings within your company. Let me know when you can talk further.

Best,
Jamie

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Best,
Jamie

- Feels desperate and urgent!
- No effort to research the person and customize
- No introduction to Jamie or explanation of why they should care to respond
- Misspellings
- Un-thoughtful questions (some are google-able)
- Asks for a job!

Bottom Line: This email screams "Do the work for me!" and would likely be deleted

Why shouldn't I ask for a job in an informational interview?

- If there are no jobs available, and they think that's all you want, they likely won't respond to your email
- Instead, if the person sees that you are curious, thoughtful and want to learn, they are more likely to help and respond.
- Job hunting may naturally come up in these conversations, and that's ok! But don't intentionally take the conversation there.

There's an exception:

If you know the person you are emailing very well, it's perfectly acceptable to just send them an email asking for more information about a job you saw posted, or ask if they know of any openings. This is not an informational interview

Good Email: Send this!



Subject: Aspiring Data Analyst - Would Love to Ask You a Few Questions

Hi Tim,

I hope this email finds you well!

My name is Jamie, and I'm a current student in the Tableau Data Analytics Certificate where I'm learning how to use spreadsheets, SQL and Tableau to solve a variety of business challenges. For one of my projects, I came across your blog post on "The Data Analyst Toolkit," and really appreciate your thoughtful commentary on today's most powerful analysis tools.

I'm currently exploring data analysis as a potential career path after my program, specifically in non-profit organizations. I noticed that you're currently at the Red Cross and I'd love to ask you a few questions about your journey, especially about your previous experience in healthcare and how it led you to this field.

Would you be available for a 20 minute chat this week? If so, I will send over a calendar invite. Thank you in advance, and I look forward to connecting!

Best,
Jamie

Strong Email: Send this!



Subject: Aspiring Data Analyst - Would Love to Ask You a Few Questions

Hi Tim,

I hope this email finds you well!

My name is Jamie, and I'm a current student in the Tableau Data Analytics Certificate where I'm applying spreadsheets, SQL and Tableau to solve a variety of business challenges. For one of my projects, I came across your blog post on "The Data Analyst Toolkit," and really appreciate your thoughtful commentary on today's most powerful analysis tools.

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Best,
Jamie

- Thoughtful, descriptive subject line
- Clear description of how you found them and what you're looking for
- Introduction to Jamie and why they are reaching out
- Single, clear request for 20 minutes of their time to chat
- No mention of a job!

Bottom Line: This email is intentionally designed. It reflects Jamie's research, curiosity and desire to learn vs. ask for a job.

Other ways to start your email:



Find common ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>“I noticed we both grew up in Queens, NY”</i>● <i>“I noticed that we both volunteered at the Boys & Girls Club”</i>● <i>“I noticed that we’re both connected to [mutual friend] on LinkedIn. I met her at a conference in 2019.”</i>
Emphasize shared goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>“I am trying to make a career change from HR. I noticed on your LinkedIn, you also shifted industries at one point”</i>● <i>“I am really passionate about social impact organizations and noticed you’ve worked at many non-profits, as well.”</i>● <i>“I noticed you also completed a certificate program in [...]”</i>
Reference something this person (or their company / team) has accomplished	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>“I listened to a recent podcast your organization was featured in about...”</i>● <i>“I read your recent medium post on...”</i>● <i>“I saw you were quoted in an article on...”</i>

Other ways to start your email:



If you know the person (i.e they're a warm connection), start with what you have in common

- *“I was given your email from [friend’s name]”*
- *“We met at a networking event last year and, while I know we haven’t touch base in a bit, I’d love to connect about...”*
- *“We were in the same group at last summer’s Company Volunteer Day and I wanted to reach out with an update on my job search and a hello.”*

A note about finding people's email addresses:

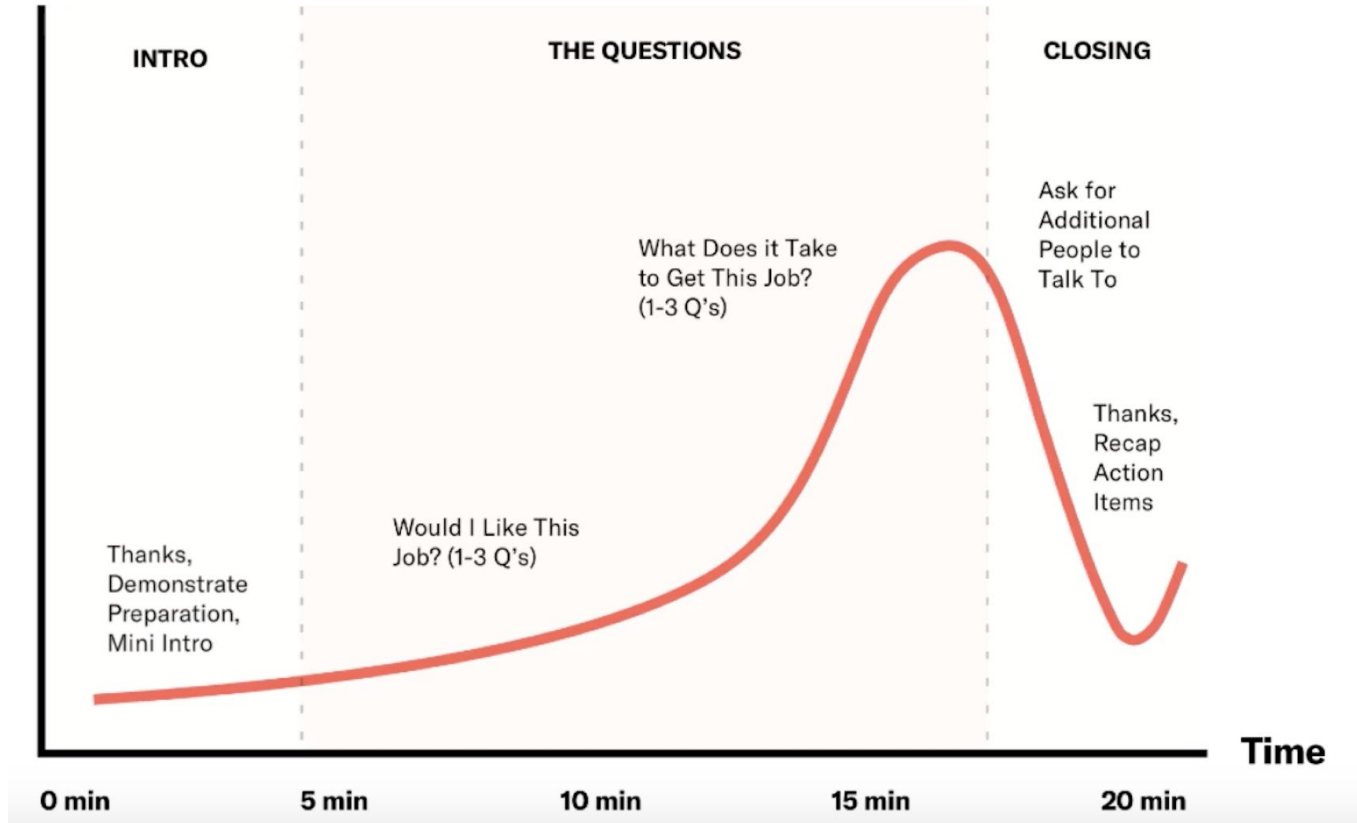
- Visit their company's website to see if it's listed there
- Use the company's website to see if you can figure out the company's email convention
 - for example: [firstname@company.com](#) or [firstinitial.lastname@company.com](#)
- Use [hunter.io](#) or [cleanbit.com](#)
- Send them a LinkedIn message instead!



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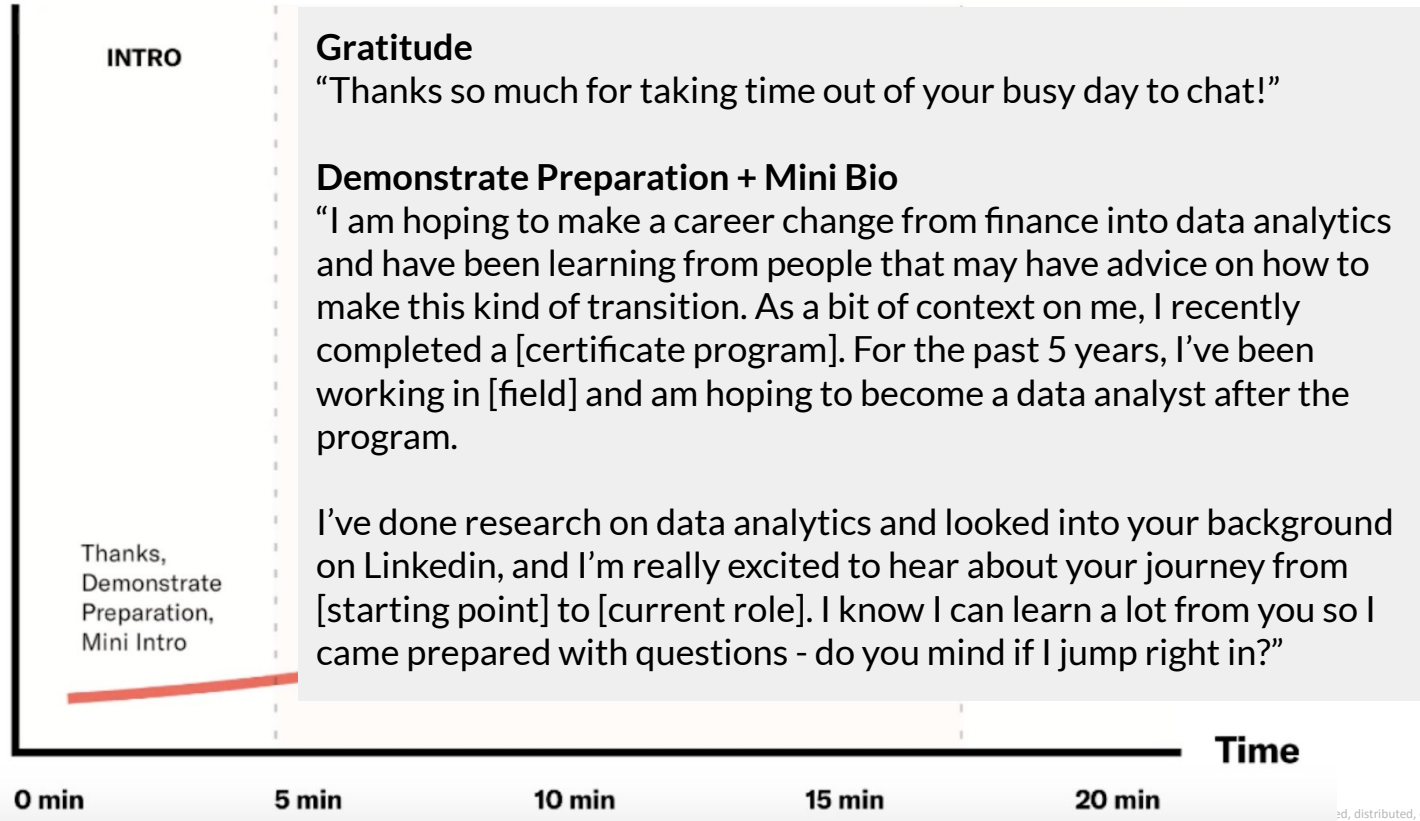
Your goal is to design a thoughtful 20-minute conversation with this person. Remember, YOU are leading this meeting so prepare questions that:

- Get you questions about the industry / role / company (remember: this is your chance to learn!)
- Are open-ended / elicit stories
- Make the person you are interviewing feel valued

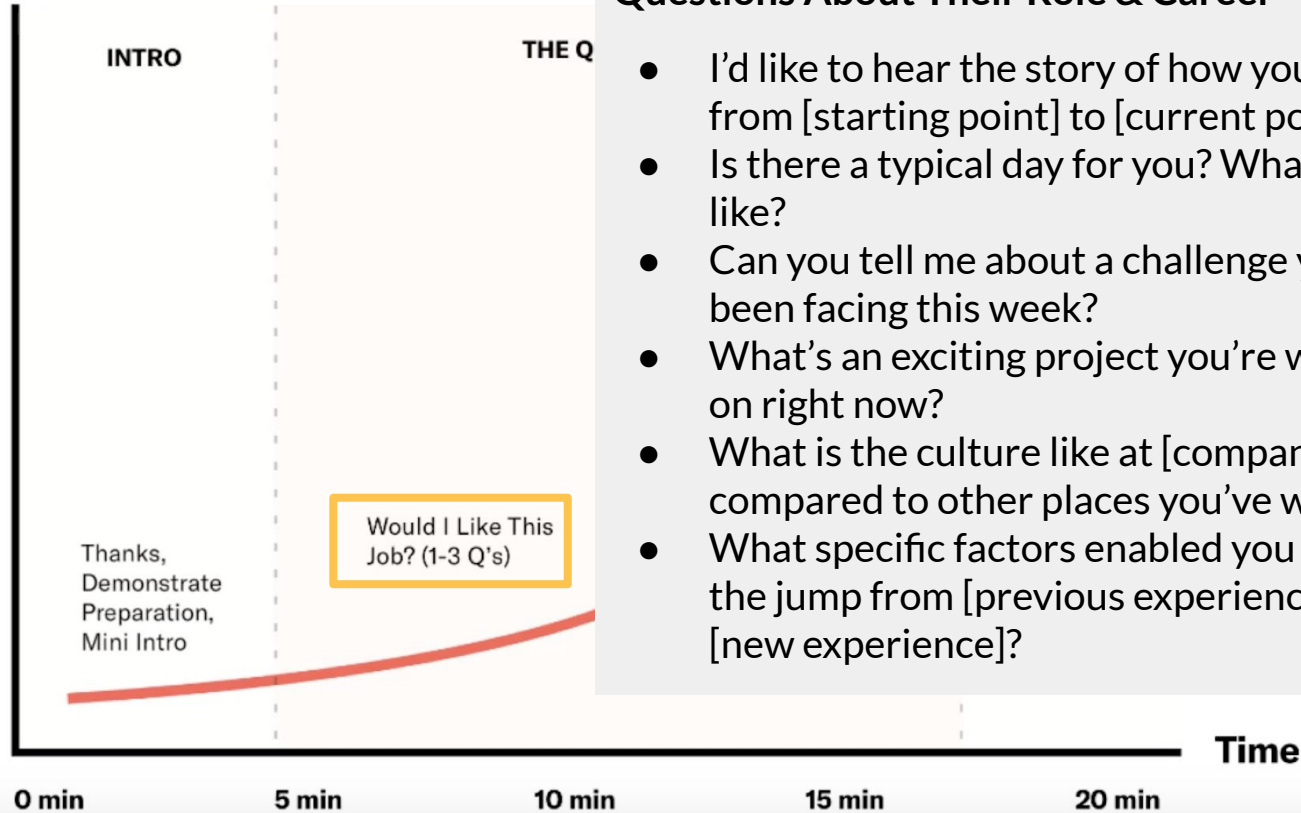
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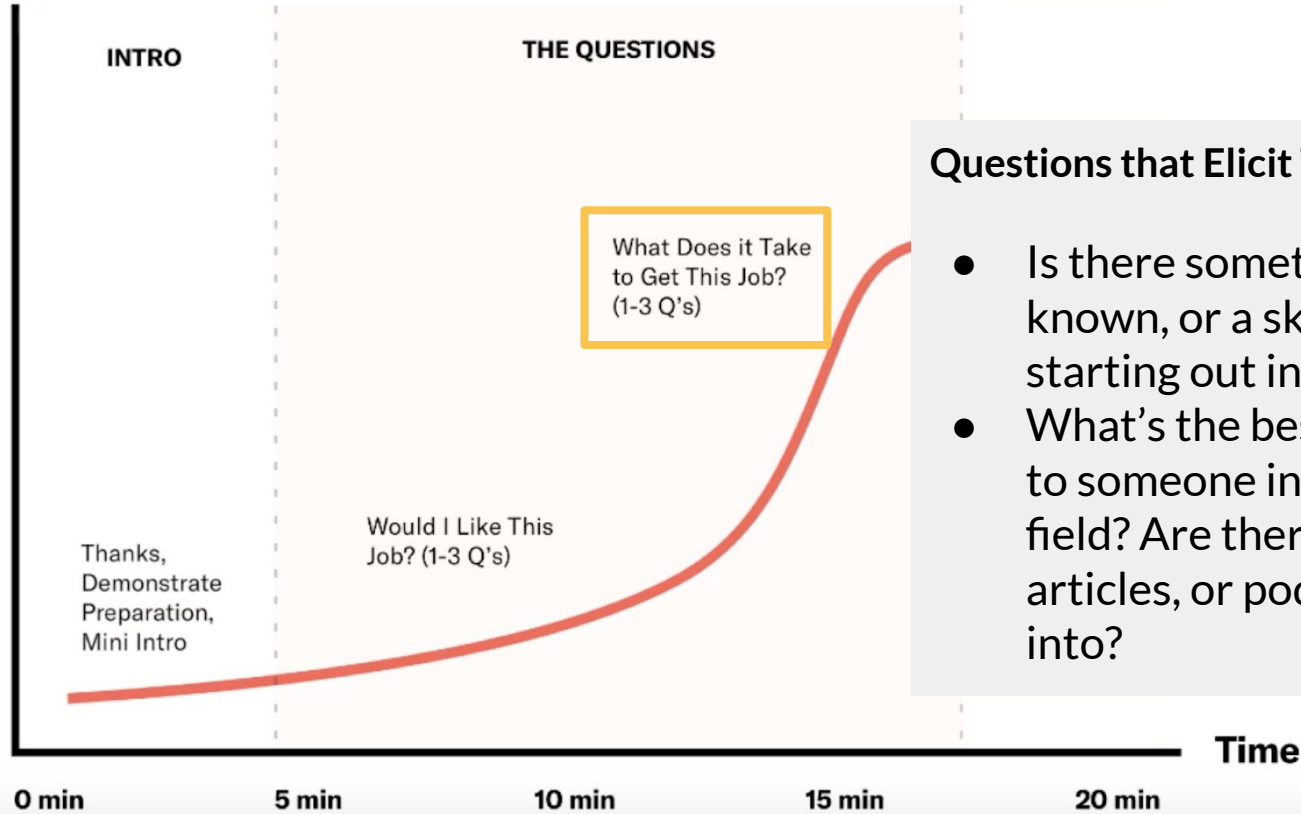
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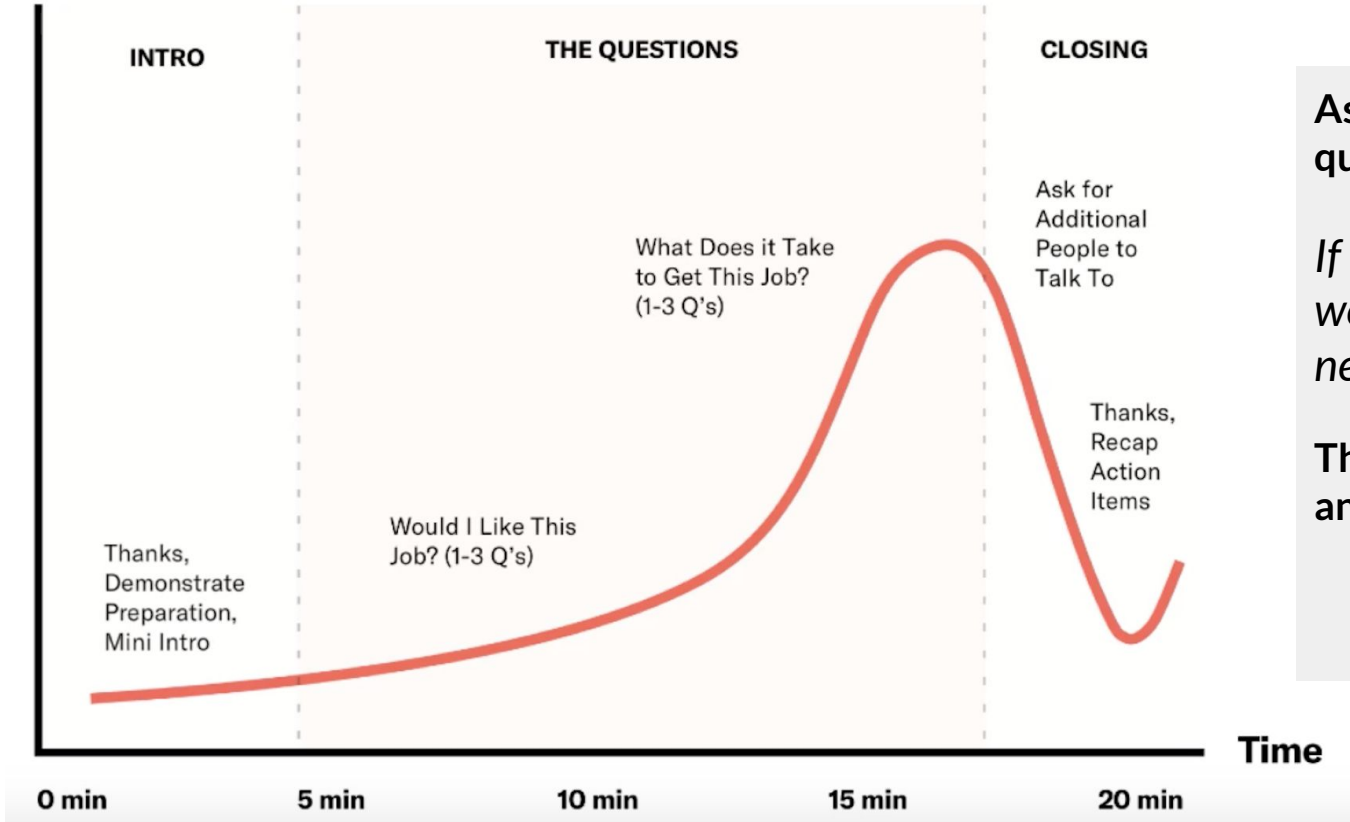
Step 4: Prepare for the interview



Questions that Elicit Their Advice

- Is there something you wish you'd known, or a skill you wish you had starting out in [industry / role]?
- What's the best advice you'd give to someone interested in this field? Are there any books, articles, or podcasts I should look into?

Step 4: Prepare for the interview



Ask the final question:

If you were me, who would you talk to next?

Then thank them and wrap up!



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Step 5: Follow up ASAP and over time

Most people stop here. But, sending a follow up email within 24 hours of an informational interview helps you stand out:

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Subject: Thank you for your time!

Hi Tim,

I wanted to send a quick note to thank you for your time yesterday. I really found your thoughts on my next steps very helpful, specifically [details about conversation].

As some next steps, I plan to [next steps from the conversation, i.e talk to more people, listen to a podcast you recommended]. I'm also hoping you can connect me to Angie via email, your coworker that you mentioned might be a good person for me to talk to next. I've included an email blurb you can use to connect me with Angie.

Thank you again for your time and I look forward to staying in touch!

Best,
Jamie

Possible Introduction / Blurb:

Jamie is a current student in the Tableau Data Analytics Certificate program, where she is sharpening her skills in spreadsheets. SQL and Tableau. She's currently exploring data analysis as a potential career path after the program (specifically in non-profits) and given your work and similar interests, I thought you two could connected.

Step 5: Follow up ASAP and over time

As a best practice, you should engage anyone you've chatted with (and found particularly helpful or friendly) **every few months**. For example, you might send an email with:

- An update on a conversation you had with someone they introduced you to
- An article, podcast etc you read that reminds you of the conversation
- An update on your job search (“I got a job, thanks for your advice!”)
- A congratulations if you see they got a new job, promotion etc.

This cultivates the relationship and ensures that you stay top of mind if opportunities cross their desk that may be a fit for your skills and interest. You also leave the door open for future exchanges where you can learn and grow from them

Other ways to connect with people remotely:

- Lunchclub: www.lunchclub.com
 - Company that facilitates 1: 1 connections for networking based on your interests
- Fishbowl: www.fishbowlapp.com
 - App that allows you to post anonymous career questions
- Public Slack Communities: [there's lots of them!](#)
 - Search “[interest area] professional slack community” on Google to discover the most relevant ones

A note about informational interview rejection (and fear!)

- When you don't hear back, it can feel like they aren't responding to "you" or are rejecting "you"
- Remember that informational interviews are about learning from someone else - they are not personal
- If they don't respond within 7 days, send a follow up (this is very important and often overlooked!). If you don't hear back after that, then move on to the next person
- The absolute worst thing that can happen is that the person doesn't respond to you. That's it.