

Field Research: Take inspired action to learn more and evaluate possibilities

To explore your priority possibilities and notice even more clues in your Intentional Exploration, we recommend taking the inspired action of conducting Field Research meetings. Talking to people who know about your areas of interest, or who have relevant experience in an organization, work or volunteer area or training opportunity, is an effective way to tell if you'll like it or not. These are not job interviews and it is inappropriate to ask for a job or to hand over your resume unless requested to do so.

Five Keys to Successful Field Research Meetings. You'll remember them because they spell **FIELD**: 1. **F**IND good people. 2. **I**NSIGHTS you can get. 3. **E**ASY for them to say 'yes.' 4. **L**IST your questions & **L**ISTEN! 5. **D**O's and Don'ts.

FIND good people. Consider asking people such as your:

- Personal network
- LinkedIn 2nds
- Parents' contacts
- Professors, Teachers
- Co-workers past or present
- Volunteer contacts
- Contacts you don't know but want to

INSIGHTS you can get. Why do Field Research meetings? Because you can:

- Explore possibilities & notice clues
- Build professional relationships
- Connect with employers
- Find out about un-posted jobs
- Gain confidence
- Make choices or rule out possibilities

EASY for them to say 'yes.' People sometimes get stuck because they don't know how to ask for a Field Research meeting. Here are key tips and a sample script.

- Use Email, phone, LinkedIn, or ask a friend or contact to introduce you
- Briefly introduce yourself
- Ask for advice
- Make it easy; ask for 15-20 minutes
- Suggest time and place
- Ask for another lead if they decline

Sample Script: "Hi _____. My name is _____. Your friend _____ suggested I give you a call. I'm interested in learning more about _____ and wondered if I could ask for your advice. Could we meet over coffee, for 15 or 20 minutes?" Listen and respond to questions. If it's a yes: "Wonderful! Thank you. I suggest Tuesday at 3pm and I can come by your office. How's that?"

Be flexible with scheduling and location. If they can't meet in person, they may be willing to talk to you over the phone, and they may want to do so right then and there. So be prepared! If they decline for any reason, be gracious and accept, though you can still ask for the name of someone else to contact.

LIST your questions & **L**ISTEN!

- Be prepared – research your contact and their organization
- Prepare what you want to say as your own introduction
- List your questions. Use or edit the list of questions below.
- Be professional in dress and manner
- Take notes during the meeting; use Worksheet on last page of handout
- Thank your contact for their time and follow up with a card or email



DOs and Don'ts

- DO Offer to buy your contact a coffee or something if you're at a café
- DO Make it conversational – good listening required!
- DO Ask for referrals
- DO Follow up afterward
- DON'T Talk more than you listen
- DON'T Eat too much!
- DON'T Push your resume unless asked

Use or edit these sample Field Research questions:

1. On a typical day, what do you do?
2. What do/did you like most your work / this organization / this educational program?
3. What do you like least about it?
4. How did you get into this work / organization / educational program?
5. Would you make the same choices again?
6. What skills and knowledge are necessary?
7. What training or experience would be important for someone getting into this field?
8. What advice would you give someone entering this work / organization / educational program?
9. What are the problems, frustrations you face regularly?
10. What related fields do you think I can explore?
11. Given my skills and experience, is it realistic that I could enter this field?
12. Could you tell me a bit about the work environment?
13. What's the management style in this organization?
14. What's a typical growth or advancement path when you enter at this level? What opportunities for advancement are there?
15. What are the salary ranges for various levels in this field?
16. What's the outlook or demand for people in this area?
17. How do you see thing in this field changing in the future?
18. Which professional journals, associations and organizations would help me learn more?
19. What is best way to apply for positions like this in terms of cover letter and resume or CV length and detail?
20. Who else do you think I could speak to about my interest?

Field Trip: Go even further, learn even more and create lucky breaks

To find out more about one or more of your priority possibilities, you can also take the inspired action of conducting a Field Trip. This is a Field Research meeting on steroids! It's chance for you to go somewhere new and have an adventure! Take yourself out into the world!

Follow the same **Five Keys to Successful with Field Research Meetings**, shared above in Field Research.

Plus, Field Trips have the additional benefits of:

- Expanding the number of people you meet
- Learning even more about the players, activities, organizations and educational institutions of interest
- Gaining more of a 'felt sense' about the place
- Creating lucky breaks!



To set up your Field Trip...

1. Write a list of your intentions and what you want to happen. For example, "I intend to meet at least two people and have at least a five minute conversation with each of them."
2. Pick a Field Trip destination that you feel fits with your priority possibilities. You may choose to get "warmed up" with a Field Trip destination where you're most at ease. Or you may choose to start with the one that blows your socks off. Places you may go:
 - Open meeting you learned about from website or email
 - Scheduled Info Session
 - Volunteer coordination office
 - Café nearby the office of interest
 - Admissions office of educational institution
 - Office of interest; ask reception to make a connection for you
 - Government building or office
 - Cultural centre or building
 - Association office
 - Office of service provider of interest
 - Conference and/or trade show
3. Prepare for your Field Trip by picking a date and scheduling it if that works for you or your contact there. Or, play it more spontaneously if that suits you.
4. GO! Go anyway!

Suggested Packing List for your Field Trip

- Field Research questions
- Notebook and pen
- Business cards
- Resume, just in case (Optional)
- List of names from the organization
- Your curiosity, enthusiasm and genuine interest in them and their place

The Art of Friendly Persistence in your Field Research and Field Trips

Friendly persistence are magic words in Intentional Exploration. It's an attitude or mindset that embodies the following:

1. I have something of value to offer. I'm proud of that. I'm not ashamed to talk about myself.
2. I will build the communication skills to convey this value to others. They may not see this value unless I show them.
3. If someone shows interest, I'll engage with them and find out about their needs and see if what I have fits for them.
4. If they are uncertain, I'll educate them, tell them stories, show them proof that the value is there.
5. If they are not ready now, I'll follow up with them later. I'll have more information to communicate the value.
6. I'll find a way that is win-win. I'm willing to negotiate and find a solution that works for all.
7. If someone doesn't wish to talk with me, I'll remember that you can't connect with everyone and I'll move on.

This mindset of friendly persistence may be the most important thing you can cultivate in your Intentional Exploration. Not only will you be more successful, you'll be happier!

Friendly Persistence adapted from Robert Middleton, www.actionplan.com



Field Research/Field Trip Worksheet

Contact Name:
Date Contacted:

Contact Coordinates:
Meeting Date:

In addition to the questions I want to ask, what I want to disclose to this contact is:

Notes during meeting:

