

Pitzer College Career Services

Guidelines for Contacting

PITZER ALUMNI

Making the Initial Contact

We recommend you that you email alumni at their place of employment. Tell alumni you received their names from the Career Services office and describe what you would like to speak with them about. Emphasize that your meeting will last no more than 30 minutes.

Distinguish between meeting to obtain general career information (information interview) versus hoping to obtain assistance with a job search (networking). Request a meeting time that will be convenient for them. If possible, it is best to meet at their place of employment. If that is not an option, you can conduct a telephone meeting.

Before Your Meeting

Do your homework first. You should have some understanding of the field before you decide to meet with alumni. Research the field or industry so you can ask educated questions. The Career Services library and the internet are excellent resources for obtaining occupational information.

Meeting With Pitzer Alumni

Your goal should be to ask for *advice* about obtaining a job in the field. Never ask the person for a job at their place of employment. If there are available opportunities, alumni will inform you of them.

- Dress appropriately for the meeting.
- Be prompt.

Questions you May Want to Ask

- What do you like most/least about your job?
- What is a typical day like?
- What type of person would be best suited for this type of job?
- What is the salary range for this type of job?
- What advice do you have about applying for and finding a job in this field?
- Is there someone you suggest I speak with about this field?

Informational Interviews vs. Networking

An *information interview* is an opportunity for you to obtain general information about a career field. Do not bring a resume with you to this type of meeting. If it is requested, send it after the meeting.

Networking is part of a job search that involves making connections to obtain assistance. It is appropriate to bring a resume to a networking meeting.

Follow-Up Meetings

Always send a thank you letter to alumni who take the time to meet you in person or speak with you on the telephone. Keep records of everyone who assists you.

Sample Inquiry Email

Below is an example of how an initial contact inquiry should look. Be brief and as specific as possible about your interest and the type of assistance you would like. Also, check your message for typos and grammatical errors. Remember, this is simply a guideline; you should craft your message in your own words.

Dear [Pitzer alumnus]:

Your background as described [*on the Pitzer Alumni Career Connections website*] is amazing. You are doing exactly what I want to do. I just cannot seem to get my foot in the door anywhere! I graduated this past May with an [*International and Intercultural Studies*] degree [*with a minor in Media Studies*]. I have had a long-standing love for international issues and media and want nothing more than to combine those two loves into a career. I have dreamed of becoming a broadcaster, but more realistically would love working for a major broadcasting company or a television station.

I have considered going to graduate school and I attended an information session at [*USC's Annenberg School*] about their [*Broadcast Journalism program*]. I have also spoken with people at NYU where you attended graduate school. After speaking with certain people, I have dropped the graduate school option for now. But you seem like a great person to get advice about advanced study. Do you think it is a good option? Would you recommend it?

I interned for [*CBA Media*] for 6 months and studied abroad in Parma and obtained lots of international media experience. The job market is really frustrating me and I am considering a move back to the east coast. You said you worked for a TV station there... which one? Did you like it?

As you can see, I am all over the place. I would love to hear any feedback you may have after reading this. I couldn't pass up the opportunity to email you as you sound like such a great resource.

Thank you in advance for your time and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Sandy Student