

**Tip: Conduct some of your own research, first!**

**Use Proquest, ABI Inform, and other databases to research the organization.**

**Check out the newspaper archives for stories about the company and the persons within it who may be identified. For example, you might find a short piece in an announcements section that says \_\_\_\_\_ [some person] with \_\_\_\_\_ [the "ABC" company] has recently won the \_\_\_\_\_ [outstanding business person of the year award] for \_\_\_\_\_ [all the things he or she has done].**

**Run the names of persons (especially managers and executives) on Google and library databases, and so forth.**

**If anyone is listed in a Who's Who directory (try to find out) and look them up. Both public and private company Web sites often list the Bio's of management as well.**

**Second, let's think about a list of questions that you might like to explore, such as:**

**I. First, you "break the ice" in a personal meeting (you can use the phone, but whenever possible, it's more effective to meet people in person). Start out with gentle conversational remarks:**

**"Gee, nice weather we're having..."; or something else that's totally politically neutral.**

**II. Start with a "global" question (in other words, an overview question; it's the same thing as "tell me a little bit about yourself..." when it's the first question in a job interview):**

**1. Tell me a little bit about how you started \_\_\_\_\_ (use the name of the company), sort of an overview, please...**

**III. You can often pick several things out of the answer to the first question and formulate new questions "on the fly" (take notes as you go along in the conversation). However, always have more ready in advance:**

**1. Could you give me some examples to illustrate the challenge you faced in starting \_\_\_\_\_ (company name)?**

**2. When problems arise, how does your management team (or how do you) resolve them?**

**3. How have the experiences that you have had during your entire career influenced the way you now run your own company?**

**4. When someone joins your company, how do you orient them as a member of your team?**

**5. How do you motivate and reward people?**

**6., 7., 8., 9., 10. (add some more, maybe custom-tailored to the particular company).**

**11. How do you select people to join your company?**

**12. How are things going in your company in general, right now: are you hiring, downsizing, or "staying as you are" in terms of your company's workforce; are sales up, down, or flat?**

**13. How do you keep up with best practices in your industry?**

**NOTE: The questions above should be enough to help you conduct the interview...but it's always safer to have "more than enough" questions so that you are prepared.**

**IV. Transition. Use something like this: "While I am here, I'd like to spend a few moments gaining a better understanding of what it's like to work in your profession."**

**1. Could you describe a typical day?**

**2. How did you first enter your line of work?**

**3. What advice would you give to someone who was considering a career in \_\_\_\_\_ [whatever the interviewee does]?**

**4. How do you keep up with current events in your industry, and as a business person in general?**

**5. What kind of formal education and additional specialized training would you recommend that a person should acquire to enter into a profession like yours.**

**V. Tips:**

**1. Leave a personal business card, and ask for one from the person you have interviewed.**

**2. Ask for company literature, such as recruiting and sales brochures.**

**3. Ask for a referral: "You have provided a wonderful interview, and I really appreciate your time and your insights. I do have a request. Who else do you know among your business contacts, inside or outside of this company who might be willing to grant me a similar information interview? Would you help me arrange an interview with that person (for example, it's often the case that the additional person with whom you might speak is down the hall, or a "phone call away"...maybe available right then and there).**

**4. Offer to reciprocate: "I appreciate your kindness in meeting with me, please let me know if I can ever return the favor by helping you in some way."**

**5. Set a date to follow-up: I will call you back and schedule a time to discuss my report in about \_\_\_\_\_ [one month, three weeks, etc.].**