

10 points about the information interview:

1. Psychology of the situation: you're asking for advice, not for a job.
2. You're trying to establish contact with the person, as a person, not just as a potential employer -- to have a conversation with that person, and to be remembered.
3. The magic word to use is "fit": I'm trying to determine my fit with the _____ industry in Ottawa.
4. My advice is don't take the résumé to an information interview -- it will lead to the person offering you résumé advice -- you want the person to speak to you and to recognize the value you could bring to a company. If the person wants to see your résumé, send it to that person with your thank-you note -- it's an opportunity to continue the conversation.
5. Manage your time -- ask for half an hour and be sure to stay within it, unless your interviewee wants to continue
6. Start with your elevator speech: "Thanks so much for meeting with me. Just as we start, perhaps I can tell you a little about myself, so you can see where I'm coming from. ..."
7. Structure the interview from the general to the particular -- What are the challenges for the industry in Ottawa? What kinds of projects/applications/software are being used? What kinds of projects is your firm engaged in? What are you working on? What's it like to work here?
8. Thank the person and ask for referrals: "Since you know a little about me now, could you recommend someone else I should be speaking to?"
9. Send a Thank you card. There's a formula for this -- it needs to be a card, a physical object, hand-written: "Thank you for the time you spent with me. I hadn't realized I do hope we'll get a chance to continue our conversation." Example of the card on my desk from Eugene. It's still there a year later because it was so nice. And I'm the one who told him to send the card!
10. I warranty my work -- glad to help you with this if you email me.
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