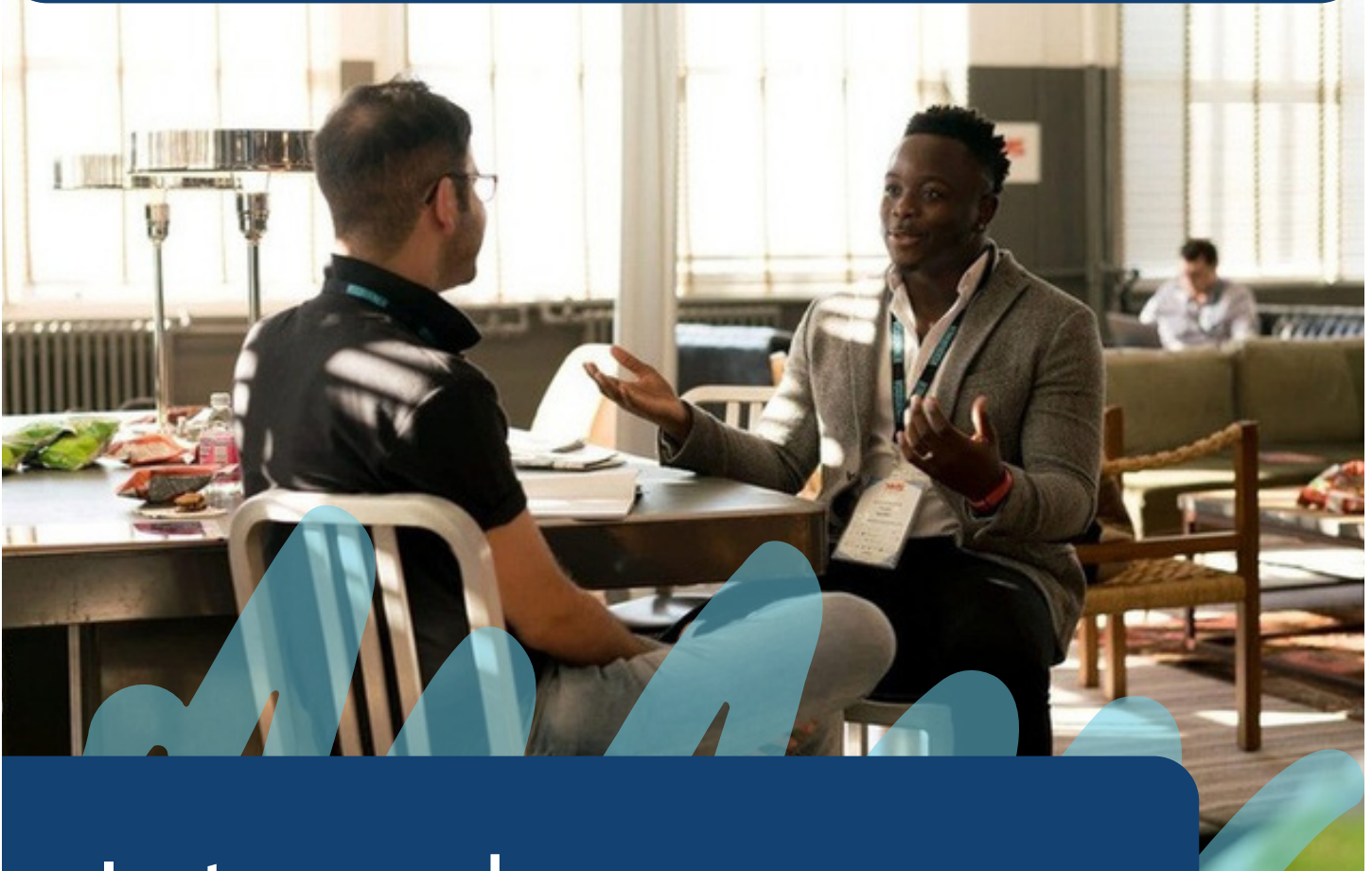




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# Internal Mentorship

TIPS FOR EMPLOYEES TO GAIN  
MEANINGFUL CAREER INFORMATION



## About this Guide

This guide was developed through the Responsive Career Pathways Research Project, and in consultation with working Canadians and small and medium-sized employers in Manitoba.

## About this Project

In March 2023, the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT) joined forces with Blueprint ADE to create a new proactive career services and workforce development model for working Canadians. The aim was to enable individuals to invest in their own career development, develop a change-ready mindset, and move forward with clarity and confidence.

The project tested a forward-thinking intervention to address the pressing workforce needs of small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and the career development needs of mid-career workers. This was achieved through three service delivery pathways: 1) Worker-centered; 2) Employer-driven and 3) Intersections between working Canadians and employers.

## Usage Agreement

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## Why Mentoring?

If you're looking to advance your career, internal mentorship can be a gamechanger. Imagine having an experienced guide to help you navigate your career path, answer your questions, and share their insights. Internal mentorship also provides access to institutional knowledge, allowing you to tap into the collective wisdom of your organization.

Mentorship is an effective way to gain a broader perspective on career options and is not solely focused on seeking a promotion or leadership role, it can lead to a more fulfilling job and a stronger connection with your workplace. Get additional support from someone who wants to help you succeed in your career.

If you're interested in personal and professional development, finding a mentor or becoming part of a mentor program is a smart move!

## What are the Benefits?

### For the Mentee

- Increased awareness to support career pathing and retention
- Improved skills and knowledge
- Increased self-confidence & motivation
- Enhanced productivity

### For the Mentor

- Increased opportunities to share skills and develop soft/common skills including leadership
- Increased job satisfaction
- Increased sense of value in the workplace and retention



## Informational Interviews

An **informational interview** is a conversation between two individuals to understand what a day in the life entails for a specific position. The conversation will typically cover tasks, soft skills, and the person's individual career path to get there.

### What could this look like?

In as little as one 30 to 60-minute lunch/coffee/conversation, an informational interview provides the opportunity to ask questions that give a behind-the-scenes look at a specific position. This could be done in person or virtually and can be especially **beneficial to hybrid** environments where people work remotely and where there are multiple locations.

### Why does this work well?

You receive targeted and immediate information a new connection/networking opportunity and can use this approach at any stage of your career. This approach builds further understanding for everyone on the roles within a company.

### How to make this happen?

You can take the initiative to schedule an interview using internal team networks, or your leaders can arrange a schedule or mentor match.

### What to ask?

This conversation may be casual, and the goal is to create a comfortable exchange, but preparation helps to get the most out of the time spent! Attached are some sample questions to help your team get started.

### What if my company doesn't have something like this?

You can pursue an informational interview independently or share the idea with your supervisor! The Employer Sheet that accompanies this is a great resource.

## Tips for Participants

Remember this is meant to be a positive and open dialogue to share and gather career knowledge. That means the conversation dynamic should be professional but feel comfortable and even casual. There's nothing wrong with having an informational interview over coffee, we encourage that if it helps set you at ease!

Preparation is not required for the person being interviewed but if you are arranging this independently, ensure the person knows what to expect. Both interviewees / interviewers should only share the information they feel comfortable with.

### Here are some tips for your first informational interview as the interviewer:

- **Prepare Questions:** Develop thoughtful questions in advance and customize them to your career values and interests.
- **Be Punctual:** Respect the start time and stick to the scheduled amount of time.
- **Introduce Yourself:** Briefly share your background.
- **Listen Actively:** Focus on what is said and take notes as appropriate
- **Ask Follow-Up Questions:** Delve deeper into topics.
- **Express Gratitude:** Thank the interviewee and follow-up with a thank-you email.
- **Reflect and Apply:** Be open-minded and embrace diverse perspectives. Consider how insights apply to your journey.

## Sample Questions

You're all set to have your informational interview! Being on the interviewer side may be new for you but it is a great opportunity to take ownership of your career and learn more about potential career pathways.

Here is a list of general questions to work from but you should feel free to customize them to the role and what you are personally interested to know more about based on your career values and reflections:

### 1. Introduction Questions:

- Can you tell me a bit about your background and how you got started in this career?
- What motivated you to pursue this career?

### 2. Job Responsibilities:

- What does a typical day look like in your role?
- Can you describe the primary responsibilities and tasks associated with your job?
- How has your role evolved since you started?

### 3. Skills and Qualifications:

- What skills and qualifications are essential for success in this field?
- Are there specific educational or professional certifications that are particularly valuable?

### 4. Challenges:

- What are some of the challenges you face in your day-to-day work?
- How do you handle challenges or setbacks in this field?

### 5. Industry and Company Insights:

- How would you describe the current state of the industry?
- Can you share some insights into the culture and values of the companies you've worked for?

### 6. Career Advancement:

- What opportunities for career advancement exist in this field?
- How have you seen your career progress, and what steps did you take to advance?

## Sample Questions Continued

### 7. Work-Life Balance:

- How would you describe the work-life balance in this career?
- Are there peak seasons or periods of increased workload?

### 8. Trends and Future Outlook:

- Are there any emerging trends or changes in the industry that someone considering this career should be aware of?
- How do you see the future outlook for this field?

### 9. Advice for Aspiring Professionals:

- What advice would you give to someone looking to enter this field?
- If you could go back and give yourself advice when you were starting out, what would it be?



### Do You Have Questions About Your Questions?

If you need help preparing for an informational interview or exploring your career values and ideas, a Career Development Professional can help!