

ENTREPRENEUR INTERVIEW PROJECT (EIP)



Introduction

Best way to learn about entrepreneurship?

Talk to people doing it successfully!



The Entrepreneur Interview Project (EIP):

Identify and Interview an Entrepreneur
(Small Business Owner)

EIP Tasks to be completed

1. Identify an Entrepreneur to Interview
2. Interview the Entrepreneur
3. Draft interview document
4. Edit and finalize document
5. Post document to the web
6. Verify post completion



What is Networking?

Oxford Dictionary:

“The action or process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts.”

What is Networking?

“It’s about us”

- It is all about people and our relationships together
- All the people and organizations we know.
- The relationships we have
- The relationships we build
- And the people they know ...

Networking – Two Components:



Networking – Help Others

What do we excel at, and how can this expertise help others (whether they be friends, vendors, customers, competitors, or business associates)?

- Learn about the needs of others (ask)
- Adapt our skills to benefit others
- Seek opportunities to help people
- Do not expect anything in return

Networking – Our Needs

What is it that we need, and how can we communicate this in a way that is easily and fully understood by others?

- Identify exactly what it is that we need
- Develop a concise appeal around these that we can quickly communicate to others
- Articulate in a way that can be easily understood

Task 1 – Identify an Entrepreneur to Interview

First, try networking:



Talk with family, friends, classmates, instructors and others you know

Ask if they might know of someone who owns a business that you might be able to talk to

Task 1 – Identify an Entrepreneur to Interview

Hit the road - Visit businesses

- Locations near home/work or web
- Approach the owner to see if they might be willing to answer eight questions for your class project
- This is easy for locations where you do business (favorite restaurant, nail shop, barber shop, dry cleaners, eCommerce store)



Task 1 – Identify an Entrepreneur to Interview

Use Social Networking

- Identify small business owners that are connected to you or those you know
- Ask if they might be willing to help



Task 1 – Identify an Entrepreneur to Interview

Purposeful Search

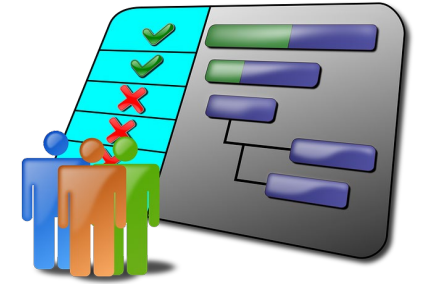
- Identify type of industry/company you wish to learn about
- Contact the owner to see if they'll participate
- This is the most difficult method
- Develop professional prospecting skills - valuable for informational interviews, and future networking activities



Task 1 – Identify an Entrepreneur to Interview

Plan for Completion

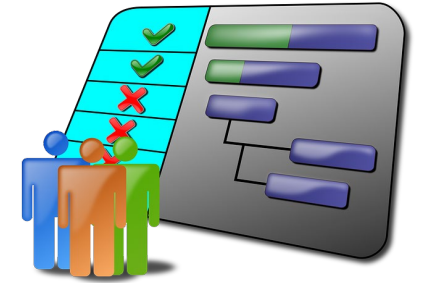
- Start the process early
- Set weekly goal:
Contact 10 prospective entrepreneurs per week
- Make contacts
- Keep trying – don't give up



Task 1 – Identify an Entrepreneur to Interview

Set an Appointment

- Get them the questions in advance so they can “think through” their responses
- Try not to schedule on a Monday
- Ask if you can record so you can focus on what they say (will delete recording later)
- If face-to-face, get them out of the office



Task 2 –Interview the Entrepreneur

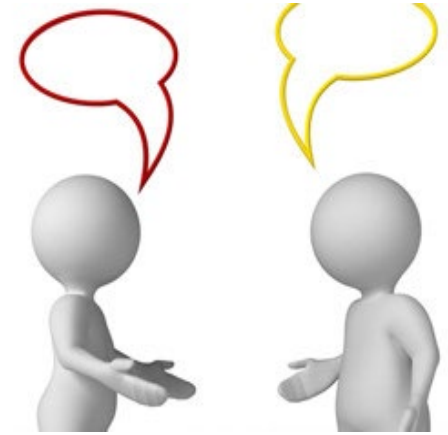
Communication Methods Available:

- Face-to-face
- Phone (land line or mobile)
- Social Media App
- Email



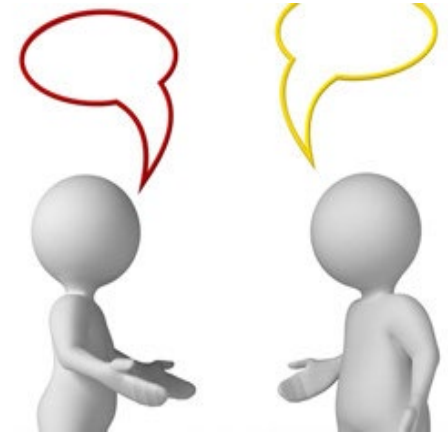
Task 2 – Face-to-Face Interview

- Most personal method
- Set appointment away from office (perhaps buy them a coffee?)
- Arrive early - Dress business casual
- Record interview (delete later) and focus on the conversation (not on writing)
- Probe for details (ask follow-up questions)
- Allow them to get back to you if necessary



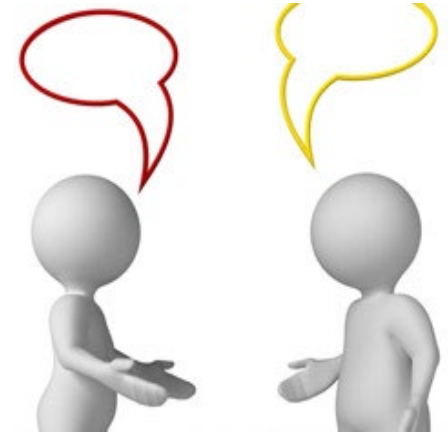
Task 2 – Phone Interview

- More personal than digital methods
- Be prepared for interruptions
- Record your conversation so you can focus on talking (delete later)
- Ask follow-up questions to get details
- Allow them to get back to you if necessary



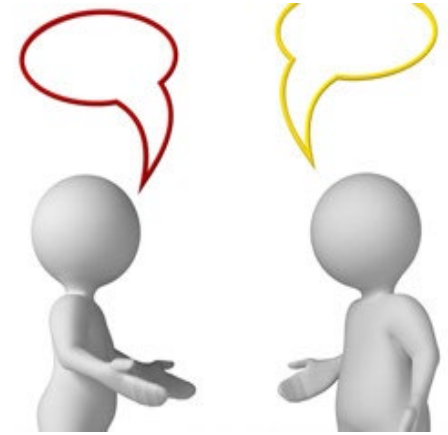
Task 2 – Social Media Interview

- Especially appropriate if this is how you found the interviewee
- Use messaging in the platform
- Probe for details – this means asking follow up questions ...
- Allow them to get back to you if necessary



Task 2 – Email Interview

- Best for truly busy entrepreneurs
- Email concise instructions and the interview questions
- Be prepared for multiple follow-up emails to probe for details
- Allow them to get back to you if necessary



Task 3 – Draft Interview Document

- Draft your document as soon as possible after the interview
- Focus on getting as much written as possible
- Do not focus on words, grammar, or punctuation
- Include your own understanding of what they said



Task 4 – Edit and Finalize Document

- Edit your document multiple times
- 1st Edit
Focus on transforming content into full sentences, and emphasize provision of details
- 2nd Edit
Correct for word use, punctuation and spelling



Task 4 – Edit and Finalize Document

- Edit your document multiple times
- 3rd Edit
Ensure you do not use names
(use 1st person instead)
Write as if you are the entrepreneur
Use the words “I”, “me”, “my”, “our”, “we”
- 4th Edit
Ensure each section has > 125 words



Task 5 – Post Document to Web

Obtain login credentials from instructor

INSERT RECORD

Go to ConsultaPedia.com web form:

1. <https://tinyurl.com/2mtm5vj8>
2. Enter login credentials
3. Click “Project Input Form” link
4. Copy and Paste into the web form
5. Click “Insert Record” to complete process

Task 6 – Verify Post Completion

Obtain login credentials from instructor

Go to ConsultaPedia.com verify page:

1. <https://tinyurl.com/2mtm5vj8>
2. Enter login credentials
3. Click “Verify Post Completion” link
4. Scroll down the page to find your post
5. Ensure that it posted correctly



Hand Out

Here is a handout with some details to help get you started.