



SKILL IDENTIFICATION HANDOUT

Accessed from the Career Development Center's Handshake Resources:

<https://app.joinhandshake.com/articles/20299>

Updated 1/04/2020

One of the most common concerns that job seekers have is not having the right skills or qualifications for the job that they want. Job-hunting experts suggest that the most important thing a job seeker can do is take an inventory of the skills that they do have. This will help you compile a convincing portfolio, write a strong résumé, and boost your confidence in what you have to offer!

Watch these QUICK videos and get started identifying your skills and strengths today!

Five Ways to Reduce the Skills Gap Candid Careers Video

Accessed from the Career Development Center's Candid Career Video Library:

<https://www.candidcareer.com/video-the+skills+gap,d93ce37f9b18c2f982b8,MNSU>

Soft Skills Candid Careers Video

Accessed from the Career Development Center's Candid Career Video Library:

https://www.candidcareer.com/gethired_detail.php?chid=88&p=career&shared=MNSU&UID=4272

7 Ways to Land a Job with a Liberal Arts Degree Candid Careers Video

Accessed from the Career Development Center's Candid Career Video Library:

https://www.candidcareer.com/gethired_detail.php?chid=100&p=career&shared=MNSU&UID=4272

Key Words Candid Careers Video

Accessed from the Career Development Center's Candid Career Video Library:

https://www.candidcareer.com/gethired_detail.php?chid=103&p=career&shared=MNSU&UID=4272

Ready to talk about your skills & strengths with a recruiter?

Find People to Network with

There are lots of ways to connect with people in your field of interest:

- Through the [Handshake community](#), connect with alumni from Minnesota State Mankato and other schools

- Through the [MNSU Career Development Center page](#) on LinkedIn.
- From professional associations. Check out association web sites for student mentoring and networking opportunities.
- From people on campus, including your professors and career counselors. Ask your personal contacts as well, such as your immediate and extended family, neighbors, co-workers, internship contacts, etc. Request their ideas on people who might have relevant career information.
- From websites of companies likely to have employees in your field of interest. For example, if you are interested in learning more about the field of health-care administration, you could look at websites of local hospitals or managed-care organizations to identify key staff to contact.

Make Contact

Once you've identified someone you'd like to talk to, what's next?

If you have his or her email address, you may want to try emailing your contact first.

1. Explain who you are
2. How you found them
3. Why you are writing
4. Ask to schedule a time to meet via zoom or phone call

Introductory Email Example

For example, here is an introductory email to the Director of Operations at XYZ Medical Center:

“Dear **[Contact First Name]**:

I obtained your name from the **[XYZ Medical Center]** web site.

I am a **[Community Health Education]** student at **Minnesota State University, Mankato** and am in the process of defining my career goals. My current area of interest is **[hospital administration]**, so I thought you would be a great resource for information and advice about this career field. Would you be willing to meet with me **[via zoom]** for 10-30 minutes so I could ask you a few questions about your career in **[hospital administration]** and how best to prepare for this type of career?

I would be happy to schedule a time that works best for your schedule.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[student's name]”

If you do not know the person's email address (or get no response to your email message) try telephoning with the same sort of approach.

Remember to mention the 10-30-minute limit – a contact is more likely to say “yes” if you ask for a short amount of time. If you try to reach someone twice with no response, look for someone else to contact.

Prepare

- Plan your questions ahead so you appear professional and prepared
- Write down your questions and take them to the meeting. Make them open-ended questions that require more than a “yes or no” answer.
- Plan to dress as you would for a job interview
- Know how to get to the interview and plan to arrive 5-10 minutes early

The Interview

- Try to relax and enjoy yourself, but always behave professionally
- Introduce yourself
- Reiterate how long you have planned for the information interview
- Ask your questions but try to make it a conversation rather than an interrogation
- Take brief notes
- When you have reached the end of your scheduled time, offer to stop. Your interviewee may say it is OK to continue, but if he or she indicates that your time is up, say thank you and express your appreciation for their time

Follow Up

Within 24 hours, send a thank-you email. Express your appreciation for the time spent with you and mention your plan to follow through on any suggestions offered in the interview.

- Reference the Informational Interview date/time
- Summarize the information you found particularly interesting
- Express appreciation for their time

Follow Up Thank You Email Example:

For example, here is a thank you email to the Director of Operations at XYZ Medical Center:

Dear **[First Name]**:

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me **[December 07 at 11 AM]** to talk about your experience in **[hospital administration]**. I appreciated learning more about the **[certifications you found particularly useful in your career development]**. I also appreciated

learning more about [**your leadership philosophy and how this influences how your decision making**].

I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to connect with me.

Sincerely,

[**student's name**]

[phone number]