

Information interview is useful to firm, interviewee

To obtain comprehensive information about a prospective career or business pursuit, the information interview represents a key strategy.

Basically, the information interview is scheduled by a person to find out more about a particular company's operation or the nature of specific position(s) held within the company.

Individuals who request these types of interviews may or may not be interested in working for the company directly; more important is the information exchange that occurs between the interviewer and the company representative.

SCHEDULING THIS TYPE OF INTERVIEW with a business you are not familiar with may at first seem intimidating — especially if the company is large and has several layers of management personnel by department or division. Regardless of the company's size, preparation is of critical importance.

After all, would you agree to meet with someone who knows nothing more about your company than its name and telephone number? Intelligent requests are what lead to this type of interview being granted.

Gaining access to basic company data involves no more than enlisting the assistance of a qualified refer-



focus: small business

Mary DiPaolo

ence librarian at a public or university library.

FROM THE COMPANY'S STANDPOINT, information interviews can be of great benefit for "future consideration." Rather than placing ads to fill positions as they become open, many companies will get back in touch with persons remembered from previous information interviews.

Company representatives also may refer individuals to other organizations as part of their own networking effort.

Contacting potential competitors as part of the information interview process should not be perceived as stealing ideas or operational strategies by one or both parties. Successful business owners already realize the competition is healthy and does not represent a threat but an opportunity.

THE INFORMATION EXCHANGE

that occurs between competitors can assist both parties in evaluating and selecting strategies that best meet the needs of their targeted customer markets.

It is a rare occurrence when two competitors operate exactly alike over an extended period of time. For those who think that imitation is the key to success, it should be mentioned that this type of strategy never works for very long.

Next week, we will begin a series on the competitive environment under which all businesses operate — and the importance of finding out who your company's major competitors really are.

Mary DiPaolo is the owner of MarkeTrends, a Farmington Hills-based business consulting firm. She is also producer and host of the cable television series, "Focus: The Small Business Environment."

datebook

MARKETING WORKSHOP
Friday, April 22 — Marketing workshop offered 9 a.m. to noon in Detroit. Fee: \$25. Information: RoseAnne Herzog, 577-4850. Sponsor: Wayne State University.

BUY A BUSINESS
Saturday, April 23 — "How to Buy a Business" offered 7-9 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$25. Information: 649-8846. Sponsor: Start A Business Store.

WALL STREET JOURNAL
Saturday, April 23 — Understanding the Wall Street Journal offered 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Southfield. Advance tickets: \$10. Information: Garrett Payne, 559-7590. Sponsor: Oakland County Business Consortium.

MUNICIPAL BONDS
Monday, April 25 — "Investing Wisely" will be offered 7:30-10 p.m. in Birmingham. Fee: \$12. Information: 644-5832. Sponsor: The Community House.

ACCOUNTING
Monday, April 25 — "Accounting for Your Small Business" offered 7-9 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$25. Information: 649-8846. Sponsor: Start A Business Store.

CAREER WOMEN
Monday, April 25 — National Association of Career Women meets 11:30-1 p.m. in Southfield. Information: 591-3390.

FINANCIAL EXECUTIVES
Monday, April 25 — Financial Executives Institute meets. Information: Donald L. Foehr, 626-3156.

ESTATE PLANNING COUNCIL
Tuesday, April 26 — Financial and Estate Planning Council meets in Troy. Information: Nancy Simon, 353-7444.

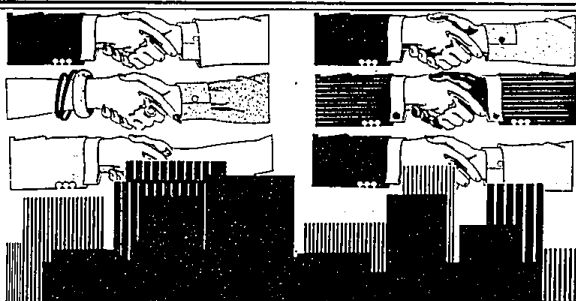
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS
Tuesday, April 26 — International

Business Forum meets. Information: Don Keesee, 540-2615.

BEST OPPORTUNITY
Tuesday, April 26 — "How to Choose the Best Opportunity" offered 7-9 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$25. Information: 649-8846. Sponsor: Start A Business Store.

MEDICAL RISK MANAGEMENT
Wednesday, April 27 — "Risk Management Essentials for the Office Staff" offered 8 a.m. to noon in Troy. Fee: \$65. Information: 1 (800) 678-3553. Sponsor: Stratton-Cheeseman Management Co.

GRE PREPARATION
Saturday, April 30 to May 28 — Graduate Record Examination preparation workshops held 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Rochester. Fee: \$115. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.



GREATER LIVONIA EXPO

MAY 10-12, 1988

presented by the
Livonia Chamber of Commerce

at
Schoolcraft College
18600 Haggerty Rd., Livonia
For Ticket Information Call 313-427-2122

(All events take place at the Schoolcraft College Athletic Facilities unless otherwise specified.)

Tuesday, May 10
6-9 p.m. Cocktail Party and Show Preview; tickets will be available at the Chamber for \$15 each or \$10 each when purchasing 20 or more

Wednesday, May 11
8-11:30 a.m. Seminar: Welcome to the World of Financing for Business Expansion and Modernization
Schoolcraft College in Room LA 200; reservations may be made by calling the Chamber; \$35 for Chamber members and \$45 for non-members

Wednesday, May 11
11:30-1:30 p.m. Luncheon at Schoolcraft College Waterman Center featuring the Small Business Person of the Year Award; tickets will be available at the Chamber for \$10 each

1:30-3 p.m. 8 p.m. "Dress For Success" Fashion Presentation for men and women at Schoolcraft College; hosted by Jacobson's; free

Thursday, May 12
11-3 p.m. 5-8 p.m. Expo open to public Five O'Clock Business Connection at Schoolcraft College; free

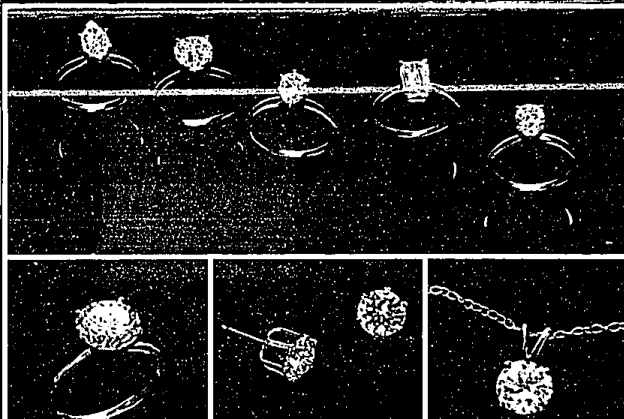
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\$1,750 to \$44,000 Sale

Earrings

\$2,300 to \$6,200 Suggested Retail
\$1,150 to \$3,100 Sale

Pendants

\$3,300 to \$10,000 Suggested Retail
\$1,650 to \$5,000 Sale

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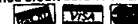
*Sale Dates and Locations:

Wednesday, April 20 NEW STORE 14 Mile Road & John R Road Across from Oakland Mall (313) 585-9590	Thursday, April 21 Sterling Heights, MI Clinton Valley Mall (313) 254-2200	Friday, April 22 Roseville, MI 28794 Grafton Avenue (313) 772-5858	Saturday, April 23 Southgate, MI Southgate Shopping Center (313) 281-0150
Westland, MI Westland Shopping Center (313) 525-6600	Southfield, MI Southfield Rd. (Between 12 and 13 mile) (313) 559-6000	Novi, MI Across from Twelve Oaks Mall (313) 348-8970	

STORE HOURS:
Monday to Saturday 10 AM to 9 PM; Sunday 11 AM to 5 PM

*Total amount in all participating stores.
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