



Prepare for the Fair

How to Interact With
Recruiters and Employers

Stacy Klein Dahlin
Workforce Specialist – Dakota County

What is a Job Fair?

- An opportunity for employers, recruiters and jobseekers to connect in one central location at a specific day and time
- This is a networking event

How to Prepare

Do Your Homework

- Check the event website
 - Review the list of which businesses may be attending
 - Check out their (company) websites for more information
 - What jobs might they be hiring for
 - Learn more about the company itself
 - Make a “short list” and visit them first!

Dress for Success

- Dress as you would for an interview
 - Some employers may conduct on-site interviews, so be prepared
- Act as you would at an interview
 - Be mindful of body language and how you interact with others
 - You never know who might be watching!
 - Turn OFF the cell phone

What to Bring

- Copies of your resume (15-20)
 - Use the “good” paper
 - It is fine to have different versions of your resume if you are looking for different types of jobs
- Pen and paper – for taking notes or filling out applications on-site
- Business cards (if you have them)
- Folder/portfolio/etc. – something attractive to put information in



While at the Fair...

Timing Is Everything

- If possible, try to arrive toward the beginning of the event. Recruiters are more energetic and “fresh”
- If this is not possible, do not worry
 - However, make sure to visit the companies you *really* want to see first when you are “fresh”

Preparation is Key

- Be ready to introduce yourself.
 - 30 second commercial/elevator speech
 - Smile, make eye contact, give a firm handshake (when appropriate)

Know Your Worth

- Know what you can provide to the company
- Remember: the key to job searching boils down to one question....

Why should I hire you???

Know Yourself

- Have a career objective in mind. Trust me, you won't do "anything"
 - Besides, if you do not know your value, how can the employers know?
 - Not having a career goal makes it difficult for recruiters to see how you will fit in with the company
 - This applies to general networking too!

Be Informed

- Employers are looking for someone who wants to work for them not someone who wants “any old job”
- When researching your “short list” look at basic information about the company
 - If they make a product(s) – what are they?
 - If they are a service provider – what type of services?
 - What is it specifically that interests you about the company?
- It is OK to ask questions, try to make them informed questions

Questions to Consider

- Be prepared to ask information about the company
 - Job description
 - Current/future/anticipated openings
 - Company culture
- Ask about the application process
 - Be expected to hear that you will need to apply online

Questions to Avoid

- Salary and Benefits
 - Focus should be more about the company and the job
 - If the recruiter/employer brings up the topic, that is fine, but let them do it first!



Other Strategies and Random Thoughts

Display Interest

- Take notes
 - It shows interest and will help you with follow up and applications
- Collect information from exhibitors of interest
 - Get business cards from recruiters as appropriate and follow up with them

Be Mindful of Your Surroundings

- Time management
 - It is wonderful if you get into a conversation with a recruiter, but remember you are not the only person in the room
 - If you see there are others waiting, or if there are indications it is time to move on, please be respectful (and get a business card!)
- Body language/non-verbal cues
 - It takes as little as *seven seconds* to make an impression

Not All Jobs Are Advertised

- If you find a company/organization you are interested in working for, but they are not hiring – *introduce yourself!*
- Recruiters are “outreach”, not always the decision makers.
 - It is appropriate to ask if there is someone specific you should talk to
 - Perhaps someone in your department of interest?
- Again, this is a *networking* opportunity – you never know who you might meet or what the future will bring!

Do Not Limit Yourself!

- Once you have checked out your “short list” make sure to check out other vendors of interest.
- Be creative – when talking to employers/recruiters think about what you can do for them, what you have to offer
- Think “outside the box”

After the Fair

- Don't forget to follow up!
- Use care on sites like: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn
 - Your online image should be consistent with your professional image
- When communicating with potential employers
 - Have a professional email for job search
 - Use proper grammar and punctuation
 - Avoid "texting" shortcuts (i.e. LOL, ☺, BFF, GR8)
- Do not be afraid to ask for help!

A Note About Support Networks...

- Parents/spouses: it is one thing to be supportive, it is another to “do it for him/her”

Finally!

- ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING!
 - Some employers would rather hire the person with the outstanding attitude and train them for the job over the one who has the technical skills but does has a negative attitude
- Be **yourself**, the best version of yourself (everyone else is taken!)



Questions?

