

## Career Management Digest

### Finding Success at Job & Career Fairs

*'Tis the season—no, it's not a holiday season—but job search season! In our line of work, it's the time for more and more regional job fairs, industry sector job fairs, individual company hiring events (on-site, in a WorkForce Center or other location). More positions than ever are out there for you. If you're looking for a job or considering a career change, now is the time to get your resume updated, get yourself mentally prepared and get busy!*

#### Job Fair / Job Hunting:

##### Have a Plan...

#### Job Hunting in Today's Economy with Little or NO MARGIN for ERROR!

Spring is traditionally the time when many employers review their labor needs for the remainder of the year and add good candidates to their companies. Job fairs can be found close to home or somewhere within the region. Some companies promote themselves and their own job fairs in house or at our local WorkForce Centers. Some companies take the innovative approach and hold job fairs online or in a virtual computer setting.

**Job fairs are a wonderful way for the serious job seeker to interact with many employers from many different employment sectors.** Representatives will be looking for good candidates in the areas of healthcare, manufacturing, building and trades, hospitality, finance, and other areas in both the public and private sectors.

Job fairs encourage open dialogues with the people who do the hiring – decision makers. Job seekers must attend these job fairs with a resume in hand, prepared to discuss the next employment opportunity. The goal is to be intent on winning over the hiring authority by highlighting their job specific skills and strengths.

Today's job market is tight, but not impossible to crack. Labor market information would support the idea that it is a "Buyers Market" for the employers out there who have opportunities. Employers are currently seeing many more applicants than there are openings. Job seekers who find good employment invest a lot of time, discipline, and effort in their job search, and these job seekers understand that the process is a numbers game where the more applications delivered to the employer... the better chances are for offers and interviews.

**It is imperative for the job fair attendee to know what kind of work that they are**

#### **seeking and be prepared to discuss opportunities in that area with employers.**

The work of job searching (and it is truly work) has changed significantly over the past few years. Job seekers must adapt to the changes in order to be successful. Little things like basic computer literacy or having a businesslike e-mail address to use in your job search or a voice mail greeting that initiates a business persona - will make a significant difference in your approach to the current job market. You will be memorable one way or the other.

*Your first impression will bring on more opportunities.... or your first impression will eliminate you immediately!*

Here is a list of do's and don'ts based on several years of experience with job fairs and employers:

**First and foremost**, dress for an interview. Maybe that Metallica or Budweiser T-shirt has sentimental value to you; however, it does not send the appropriate message to prospective employers. Ditch the sweats, shorts, and flip-flops if you are at all interested in finding work. It will be more important to be taken seriously by the employer rather than showing your flamboyant lifestyle, piercings, or distractive body image. Employers also want to be taken seriously, so remember that they may be conducting interviews on-site with only those that they consider to be serious candidates.

**Second**, if you have children, leave them at home. Children will distract you from the task at hand – finding a job. They will also distract others because most kids are too darn cute. It is extremely difficult to remain composed when speaking with prospective employers if your child is crying or running down the aisle. In those cases, it will automatically put a fear or doubt in the mind of the employer as to whether you've got childcare handled or if you will always be calling in late or calling in about missing work since your childcare is not reliable.

**Third**, do not conduct your job search with a group of friends. Remember, it is YOUR job search! You are selling yourself, and you can do it much more effectively when you are alone. Attending with friends who are also serious about finding work is fine, but approach the employers that you are interested in on your own.

**Fourth**, after defining your main area of interest, research the companies that interest you. If possible, always do this research at home or elsewhere before you arrive at the job fair. Research is a hidden factor and you will be complimenting any company who recognizes that you have already done your homework on what they do and who they are. Again, the representatives of those companies appreciate it when applicants show that they have done their homework. The applicant demonstrates



that they are willing to go above and beyond in their effort, and it saves the company representative time and effort in explanations.

**Fifth**, have several copies of your neat, concise, and updated resume ready to selectively distribute to your targeted employers. Print them on good quality paper and keep them neatly (clean and crisp) in a folder ready to hand out. Remember, applications are what the **employers** want to know about you, but your resumes are what YOU want the employers to know about you. Note.... have a good black or blue pen ready to use when asked to fill out applications at the job fair.

**Sixth**, be prepared to talk about your experience and training and how it relates to

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a particular employer. This is called meeting the expectations of the employer. The most common problem faced by job seekers is the inability to effectively communicate their skills and training during the interview. This skill requires practice and preparation. If you don't say all of the good things about yourself, who will?

Though this list is certainly not complete, it will hopefully provide a solid foundation for job seekers as they look for work. The successful candidate will be among those who understand that they are selling themselves in the marketplace. The job seeker understands that they really own their own company by the name of YOU, Inc.; or whatever other catchy name they mentally use to describe their special skills and experiences for this local marketplace / labor market. And if they are going to be among the most successful candidates finding employment... they gladly put in the time, discipline, and effort to seek employment. Thus, they will PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE for the opportunity – for the job fair contact - that could be life changing!!!

Final Thought: Your job search will be more successful, once you decide.... that looking for work is nothing more than looking for INFORMATION.

*~Submitted by Bruce Thompson, Placement Specialist, Workforce Development, Inc., Olmsted County and Ed Duda, Career Counselor, Workforce Development, Inc., Olmsted County*

### DO YOU HAVE AN ELEVATOR SPEECH?

An elevator speech is just a way for you to introduce yourself to employers, focusing on your professional history, accomplishments, and focus.

When creating your “elevator speech,” make sure to include the following:

Name • Relevant Career Goals • Relative Experience/Skills

A great way to keep conversation going with employers is to ask them questions once you have finished telling them about yourself. You might ask:

What do you like most about what you do?

So what got you started in this career?

What advice do you have for someone like me who is trying to get into this field?

The key is to start a conversation, highlight things about yourself that are **UNIQUE and MEMORABLE** and figure out if the company is a good fit for you while making the employers believe that you are the perfect person for the job!

Resource: [https://www.careerhelp.umn.edu/sites/careerhelp.umn.edu/files/personal\\_commercial\\_0.pdf](https://www.careerhelp.umn.edu/sites/careerhelp.umn.edu/files/personal_commercial_0.pdf)

*~Submitted by Amy Lofquist, Career Counselor, Workforce Development, Inc., Steele County*



### JOB FAIRS - SAVE the DATES - 2017....

**Wednesday, March 1, 2017- Retail 9:00am-11:30am @ Rochester Workforce Center – RCTC Heintz Center**

**Tuesday, March 14, 2017-Construction 9:00am-11:30am @ Rochester Workforce Center – RCTC Heintz Center**

**Thursday, April 6, 2017-Health Care 9:00am – 11:30am @ Rochester Workforce Center – RCTC Heintz Center**

**Wednesday, April 12, 2017, Albert Lea Spring Regional Job Fair, 1:30-5:30 pm, Northbridge Mall, Albert Lea**

**Thursday, April 27, 2017- Rochester Post-Bulletin Job Fair 9:00am – Noon @ the RCTC Sports Arena / RCTC Fieldhouse on the Main Campus**

**Thursday, May 11, 2017– 10 am-1 pm, Faribault Regional Job Fair @ Faribault West Mall**

Workforce Development, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Service Provider and a proud partner of the American Job Center network. This information is available in alternative formats for people with disabilities by calling 507.292.5180 or by using your preferred relay service.

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