

Career Management Digest

'Tis The Season...For HIRING!

Twelve...yes, TWELVE shopping weekends until Dec. 24! It's hard to believe that the holidays will soon be here. What does that mean for job seekers/career changers? It means that seasonal hiring will be ramping up, and that means more job opportunities. We're not just looking at retail; many other industry sectors are also going to be impacted: food industries will be going into overdrive, some companies that produce packaging will be hitting it hard and other industries will be selling more home repair/improvement products. Perhaps you are looking for a part-time job to supplement your current employment. Perhaps you're looking for a part-time, seasonal job to help with some additional household costs. You might even be looking for a way to transition from one career field to another; page 2 offers some ideas for that topic. SO no matter where you fit, there will be hiring opportunities in your area.

Invest In Yourself, Invest In Your Career

Job searching for whatever reason? It's important to take some time to attend job fairs, career expos or hiring events. While there, you will meet with employers (yes, face-to-face!) that you might not be able to talk to in person when/if you get an interview. Plus, job fairs and career expos often offer networking programs, resume reviews, and workshops for job seekers.

What can you do to compete with the others that attend these events? These tips will help you prepare and maximize your opportunities while you're there.

Dress for Success. Everyone should plan to attend the job fair dressed for success in professional interview attire, and carry a folder (preferably a pocket folder) or portfolio to keep copies of your resume, the company rep business cards you will collect as you visit, a notebook to jot down things about each company you visit with and a pen or two and other documents. (while we're on the notebook comment-I want to mention what to note: After each meeting, take a minute to write some notes on the back of the business cards or in your notebook to keep things straight.

What do you wear? It seems that recently, even the participating business reps have been "business casual"—I haven't seen a lot of suits/shirts and ties. For men, I'd recommend a pair of dress slacks, khakis or new, dark washed jeans and please wear a belt! Avoid sandals/flip flops, or worn out shoes. A nice pair of casual shoes (or if you have to, a nice pair of tennis shoes) and a buttoned shirt or polo shirt works-

make sure it has a collar. For gals, a pair of dress slacks, a sweater set/nice blouse with a jacket and again—closed-toe shoes. Keep



the make-up/jewelry/accessories to a minimum. Make sure that all tattoos are covered and think hard about your piercings. Can they come out or be covered?

Write and Practice a "30 Second Elevator Speech". This speech should summarize your skills and experience so you're ready to promote your candidacy to prospective employers. This is sometimes called an "elevator speech" (because it should only be 30 to 60 seconds long, the time the typical ride on an elevator takes). Be enthusiastic, engaged and genuine. Remember the old adage "Practice makes perfect"? Practice this pitch beforehand and you'll more confidently deliver it at the job fair.

Check Out Companies Before The Event. Most hiring events are well-publicized and information lists most of the businesses who will be attending. Check out the company' web sites and look for their mission, open positions, and general information before you go. Make notes so that you remember a few key facts about each business. Demonstrate knowledge about each company you are interested in as you're talk-

ing to them, and you'll certainly stand out from the crowd.

Arrive Early And Get Familiar. Most will have some sort of map available to let you know where each business is located. Attend a Workshop if any are offered and ask questions. You're there to learn and it's a great way to network.

Network. Speaking of networking: if you are waiting in line, talk to others and exchange business cards. Stay positive, polite and professional. You never know who might be able to help with your job search.

Show Initiative and Enthusiasm. Extend your hand, look them in the eye and smile. Introduce yourself and use that Elevator Speech. Mention some fact you remember Shake hands and introduce yourself to recruiters when you reach the table. Maintain direct eye contact. Demonstrate your interest in the company and their job opportunities.

Ask Some Thoughtful Questions. The questions you ask should show interest and knowledge in their organization. Employers are looking for skills AND interest. One question I like to ask is, "What brought you into this business/field?" Remember to get their business card, too. Some recommend creating a contact list and connecting via LinkedIn afterward.

Say Thank You. Take the time to send a brief, hand-written thank you note to the company representatives you have met. Thank them and state again your interest in the company and remind that you're a strong candidate.

~Valerie Kvale, Placement Specialist, Workforce Development, Inc., Freeborn County

More info? Go to:

<https://www.thebalance.com/tips-for-getting-the-most-out-of-a-job-fair-2061616>

You've Spotted The Perfect Job But Lack The Traditional Experience-Now What?

Does this sound familiar? You are not super-passionate about going to work every day but you go, you do your job and you enjoy it. You just don't feel the "spark". One day, you're reading the newspaper, visiting with a friend or perhaps you're driving to dinner and you see a new business is "Coming Soon". Regardless of you hear about it, your gut tells you that you just might have found your dream job!

After a little research, you see the posted requirements. Looking at your degree or work experience, you are unsure and decide that you'll probably never get an interview. Don't give up. Have you ever heard the expression that goes, "Where there's a will, there's a way?" Remember, it isn't always just about the degree or experience. Yes, some positions require a technical degree or experience. There's no getting around some of those requirements. But—you might have transferable skills that are very applicable and that could make you a viable candidate for the position.

A career changer might want to look at the required skills, training and/or experience compared with what he/she might have to offer. Here are some hints for someone who wants to change careers:

Create a list of your experiences, skills/abilities and work recognition. Ask someone how many skills they think an average person has and they will usually give you a number between 10 and maybe 25. Dick Gaither, a well-respected and knowledgeable national leader in workforce development, has shared a number of at least 300+ skills that the average person possesses. Build your list and don't sell yourself short!

Go beyond standard resume language such as: "experienced in MS Office Suite" or "graduate of UMD" or "hard-working" or "an effective communicator". Build that list—you can always tailor it at a later date. Start with asking yourself:

- ~What good things would past supervisors/co-workers/mentors or teachers say about me?
- ~How have I contributed measurable results in the past?
- ~How have I contributed in other ways?
- ~Have I shown leadership in company committees, etc.?
- ~Have I won awards or earned recognition?
- ~Have I had a major fail in the past? Count this as a win too, (because you gave it a heck of a try.)
- ~What can I provide to this company if they hire me? Both on the job and unofficially?

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~What is my education, both formal programs of study, on-going trainings, workshops and other certifications?

Talk to people already working successfully in the field and learn more about what the position actually is about. Find out if there are abilities needed that aren't mentioned but can be dealmakers or breakers. Employers like people who are quick learners and who "get it".



Match your strong suits with the job description and the info you've learned from your interviews. Are they looking for strong organizational skills? This can be translated into your experiences in organizing the agency file system, or forms document folders online, etc. Perhaps you have entered and won a community baking contest three years in a row. While it might be on your resume, take a look at what it says about you: 1. Not afraid to stick your neck out and try something, creative and loyal (you've done it three years in a row!). You're also good at it—you have three wins under your belt!

Have a conversation with someone you respect, who knows you well and who will be honest with you. Find out if they think that the job you're considering seems like a good fit for you. Ask them:

- ~How would you react to my resume for this job?
- ~"Is there anything on this that you: don't believe/question or that makes you pause?"
- ~"Is there a better way to re-word this section?"
- ~"Are there any red flags or gold stars that stand out?"

Once your application looks ready to go, put your apprehension behind you. Show the hiring manager that you're the best choice because of your unique background, not despite it.

More information? Go to:

- ~<https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-apply-for-a-job-in-a-new-field-when-you-have-no-traditional-experience>
- ~<https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/should-i-still-apply-for-a-job-if-i-dont-have-years-of-experience>
- ~<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/244324>