

Job Fair Boot Camp

Part 3. After

The Follow Up

Most employers will say that they'll try to get back to you within a few weeks, or something along those lines. What they are really saying is that we *might* contact you. In other words, if you want to really get the job...call them. Some employers may not even consider you if you don't. That's why it's so important to get their business cards and note the contact information of others you spoke with.

Advice: Consider jotting down *how* the employer would like for you to follow up on the back of his business card. This is a great way to keep track and stay organized.

Thank You Letters

Recruiters often base their decisions on a candidate's follow through, which is why writing a thank you letter is crucial. Typically, recruiters have hundreds of candidates to filter through so always send the letter within one to three days after a fair so you are contacting them before they contact you.

When writing your thank you letter, go through the company literature you picked up and review your notes from conversations with recruiters. Thank the recruiter for his time, restate your interest and qualifications for the position, recall something that you discussed or that you missed, reiterate your interest in a second interview, and indicate when you will follow up again.

Be sure to send your thank you letters immediately. Include another copy of your résumé with a cover letter highlighting your discussion at the career fair and how your qualifications match the open position. This may sound redundant, but in most cases, your résumé may be sent around the office for approval and an accompanying cover letter will be necessary.

Advice: File away the literature you obtained, you may find it useful in the future... perhaps for an interview.

Maintain Contact

Perseverance is a good thing. The traditional time to follow up with employers after sending a thank you letter is between ten days and two weeks. After that, follow up again in three to four weeks—one message every two to four weeks, but no more. If you don't hear from them after the second attempt, move on.

Don't get discouraged if a company never responds. Sometimes big companies need more than three to four weeks, and sometimes they will only respond to candidates they are interested in. This doesn't mean you should call them every day or week to check on the status of your application.

Advice: Take the hint. If it is meant to be that you will be a future employee of XYZ Company, then it will happen. Just give it time and practice a little patience.

Improve your Résumé

You've heard it a million times: a résumé is always a work in progress. If you learned something at the career fair that better reflects your qualifications or focus, then include that information in your résumé. It's alright to make changes and/or add information. Just keep in mind the length and content and always stay true to yourself in the process.

Advice: Bring your newly revised résumé to an interview even though an employer may have the old version. This is actually an ideal situation because it gives you the opportunity to hand him a new and fresh résumé. Offer the résumé as an updated version to reflect your increased marketability.

At the end of the day, remember why you attended the career fair. Keep in mind the five things you should take away:

- Business cards from recruiters
- Notes on contacts you made
- Literature on organizations you've contacted
- A better sense of your career options and goals
- Self confidence from employer interaction

Career fairs can be a breeze as long as you go about them the right way. If you prepare ahead of time, dress the part, and know your business, you will have a better chance at landing that dream job!