

## **Job Fair Boot Camp**

### **Part 2. Arrival**

#### **Arrive Early and Alone**

Your professional image is the most important thing to maintain, so leave the friends and family at home. Arriving as early as possible will allow you to see the busiest recruiters first. Peak hours should be used to speak with other recruiters who may not be as busy. Arriving late may cause you to miss the organizations you had planned to contact.

Upon arrival, see if any new companies have registered. Meet with your top choices first and remember to be patient and stay flexible. Your top choices may be the choices of many others.

If you did not find out in advance which companies will be participating, arriving early will be your saving grace to review the career fair handout and route your action plan. You want to avoid asking employers, “So what does your company do?” Always demonstrate that you are knowledgeable and prepared.

*Advice:* Maintain your professionalism and get ready. It is crucial to give the best possible first impression to employers, even in elevators, corridors, parking lots, etc. Personal contact with a recruiter can happen in any place and where you least expect it. Remember to just be yourself. Be sincere and trust your intuition.

#### **Face to Face with the Employer**

When you are face to face with your future employer, look him or her in the eye, smile, and shake his hand. Remember that sales pitch you practiced? This is the point where your practice will pay off as you show the employer that you know what you are talking about. Hand the recruiter a copy of your résumé and expound on it quickly.

#### *Mini-Interview*

Be polite and answer all questions that are asked with confidence. Utilize the key points in your résumé so when an employer reads it later, he will clearly be able to recall your discussion. Ask questions about the company and let him know you understand what it does and where you fit into its plans. Here are some more points to follow:

- Avoid distractions such as using “you know, um, uh.”
- Keep it business professional. Don’t ask a recruiter personal questions.
- End with open-ended questions. Create conversation.
- Collect company literature and contact information.

*Advice:* Speak naturally and avoid giving “speeches.” You don’t want it to appear as if you memorized your end of the conversation. This could make you sound desperate.

#### **Take Notes**

Don’t be afraid to take notes while speaking with an employer. He or she expects it. And, of course, if you think of anything you forgot to mention, take notes immediately following so you may touch on those points in your follow-up letter.

*Advice:* Take note of the contacts you spoke with who may not have had business cards.

## **Employment Applications**

If you are asked to fill out an application, ask for two copies. One will be your rough draft and the second will be your final. If it is acceptable for you to take the application home, that is even better. This will give you more time to complete it and will allow you to send it via mail with a note saying that you met Mr. XXX (the recruiter's name) at the fair.

*Advice:* If you only have one application and are able to take it home, consider making copies of it so you can do a rough draft or two before sending a final version to the company.

## **Know When it's Time to End the Conversation and Leave**

Take notice when the recruiter is looking over your shoulder at other candidates or says, "Thanks for stopping by." This means that it's time to thank the recruiter for his time and move on.

Thank the recruiter by the name he mentioned upon greeting you and ask for his business card. Ask about the next step in the recruiting process or the preferred method of follow up. On the other hand, don't be surprised if a recruiter is really impressed with you and your salesmanship. If this is the case, he may ask you to stick around and talk a little bit more about your goals and possibly set up a formal interview.

*Advice:* If you were unable to ask a recruiter all the questions you wanted to, you can always go back once the line of job applicants has receded. Mention that you had a few more questions you wanted to ask and if he had time to address them.