Networking at a Career Fair

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Presentation Overview

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Activity
Networking Defined

“Networking is making links from people we know to people they know, in an organized way, for a specific purpose, while remaining committed to doing our part, expecting nothing in return”

- Fisher & Vilas in *Power Networking*
Why is networking important?

- 61% of jobseekers found employment through networking.
- A referral generates 80% more results than a cold call.
- “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.”
The Law of 250…

- Every person knows about 250 other people.
- Each person you know knows about 250 more people, so that is 62,500 people at your 2nd level of acquaintance.
- Each of your 2nd level people know about 250 people, so that is approx. 15,000,000!
The Law of 250...

- It is important to note that typically it is not your 1\textsuperscript{st} level of contact that hires you...in fact, you may find that the hiring authority may be 3 or 4 levels deep.
Now do you think networking is important?
So...you’re going to a Career Fair...

- Where do you begin?
- What should you expect?
- What is a career fair, anyway?
Career Fair Defined…

- by an employer:
  an event where I can meet and screen a large volume of potential job candidates.

- by a job-seeker:
  an event where I can go develop some relationships that will lead to my getting a job.
Before the Career Fair…

- Check out the career fair website to see who is going to be in attendance.
- Make a list of the organizations you are most interested in & do your homework.
- Polish up your resume!
- Pick out what you are going to wear
Before the Career Fair…

- Create your “elevator speech” or “1 minute commercial.”
- Try to obtain a map of the exhibitors & plan your attack!
  - Most interested companies 1st thing in the morning.
- Get a good night’s sleep for 2 days before the event.
- Pack your brief case!
Trade Secrets…about your attire

- **MEN**
  - Dark suit that FITS! (black, navy, charcoal, grey)
  - Shirt (white or french blue)
  - Tie (conservative pattern like stripes or plaids)
  - Shoes & socks (clean & polished. Socks to match your pants)
  - No jewelry (other than wedding band/college ring)

- **WOMEN**
  - Dark suit that FITS! (black, navy, charcoal, grey, pants or skirt)
  - Blouse (subtle pinks, yellows, white, blue, etc.)
  - Pantyhose (nude)
  - Jewelry Rule of 1 (necklace, set of earrings, ring/hand, watch/bracelet, pin)
Trade Secrets...about your briefcase

What to pack in your briefcase

- List of companies you plan to talk with
- Copies of your customized resume (2/company)
- Copies of your general resume (about 10-15)
- Copies of homework you did on the company
- Planner/PDA/Daytimer
- Notebook/pad & quality pen
- A pack of facial tissue
- A reliable pain reliever
- Medicine used to treat recurring conditions (inhaler, allergy tabs, etc)
- Shoe polisher
- Personal hygiene products
- Breath mints/spray
- Duct Tape
- Cash
- TURN CELL PHONES OFF!
During the Career Fair…

- Wear a nametag!
- Enter the hall & survey the situation
- Attempt to establish a rapport with the recruiters.
- Gather information from booths, but don’t be greedy.
- Be prepared to answer **AND** ask questions
- Ask about the organizations recruiting timetable
During the Career Fair...

- Don’t overstay your welcome.
  - Over the shoulder trick
- Collect business cards
  - Make notes about conversation on the back
- Politeness counts!
- Make connections with recruiters & fellow job seekers.
Trade Secrets...about establishing rapport

- Nametag should go high on your right shoulder
- Handshake should be firm & web to web
- Look the person in the eye
- Smile
- Introduce yourself
- Use open body language
- Try to stay focused on the recruiter

- Master the art of “small talk”
- Try to establish connections (i.e. hometowns, colleges, etc.)
- Ask for business card & jot down highlights from the conversation
- If you aren’t interested, don’t waste their time
- Be patient & polite!
After the Career Fair...

- Send thank you notes to each recruiter.
- Reflect on your system, execution, and results.
- Make plans to follow up with each recruiter in about 2 weeks to express your continued interest in the company.
Trade Secrets…about thank you notes

- Send note within 24 hours of the interview
- Handwritten on personal stationary is ideal
- Thank them for time & help, restate your interest, qualifications, and interest in an interview, & promise to follow up with a phone call.
- Check your spelling, grammar, & penmanship!
Additional information...

- FOLLOW UP!
- Don’t initiate conversations about salary & benefits! – TOO EARYL!
- FOLLOW UP!
- You only have on average 2-5 minutes to make a positive impression
- FOLLOW UP!
- If standing in line to talk to a recruiter, eavesdrop on the person in front of you!
Questions? Comments?
My information...

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