Networking Best Practices for Career Advancement

Shun McGhee
Career Coach @ American Public University System
Speaker Profile

Shun McGhee
Career Coach
American Public University System

- Born in Washington, D.C.
- Attended “The” Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland
- Is the fifth of five children
- Is committed to excellence
Objective

- By the end of this presentation you will be able to attend an in-person career fair armed with the knowledge, skills, and resources to help you make a lasting impression on the employers you meet.
What is a Career Fair?

• What is a career fair?
  – A fair or exposition for employers, recruiters and schools to meet with prospective job seekers.
  – Career fairs usually include company or organization tables or booths where resumes can be collected and business cards can be exchanged.
What is a networking event?

• A business network is a type of social network whose reason for existing is business activity.
• Business networking is a socioeconomic activity by which groups of like-minded business people recognize, create, or act upon business opportunities.
Networking Events vs. Career Fairs

- Networking events are usually advertised to folks within the same socioeconomic group.
- A career fair contains folks from various socioeconomic groups and are generally advertised to a wider range of people.
• At career fairs employers and applicants are there for the express purpose of hiring and finding employment.

• At networking events people are not necessarily looking for employment but could be there for a number of reasons, such as securing funding, gaining industry knowledge, or meeting a significant other.
Similarities

• Both contain potential employers.
• Both can result in employment.
• Both can result in forging important industry related contacts.
Why Should I Attend a Career Fair?

• To make an impression your resume cannot do alone.
• To learn more about employers than you can from their virtual or online presence.
• To visibly convey your passion for a specific position.
What Should You Expect to Find at a Career Fair?

- Expect the unexpected.
- Expect to have to overcome objection.
- Expect to be interviewed on the spot.
How Do You Prepare for the Unexpected?

• Practice, Practice, Practice.
• Create the scenarios and rehearse your responses to them.
• Know your stuff.
What Should You Bring With You?

• Don’t come empty handed.
• H₂O
• Bring a dynamite resume.
  – Quality resume paper.
  – Does not contain color or anything else that could be considered distracting.
  – Free of grammatical errors.
  – Matches your career interests.
  – Makes recruiters want to learn more about the applicant.
• Resume should be
  – Appropriate format for the industry or field of interest.
  – Appropriate length for the industry or field of interest.
What Should You Wear

• It has been said that, “Clothes don’t make the man or woman.” The truth?
  – We are judged by our appearance.

• We arrive at a career fair not just representing ourselves but a brand.
  – Brands are important because of the relationship to quality associated with them.
What Should You Wear Continued

• Wear a suit to a career fair.
  – Blue, black or grey are appropriate colors.
  – Men should wear a jacket and pants.
  – However, women can incorporate a skirt or a blouse.

• Allow yourself room to be distinct.
  – Men might want to employ a pocket square or tie that stands out.
  – Women may want wear a statement piece.
Before You Go In

• Have your elevator pitch on the tip of your tongue.
  – An elevator pitch is a really quick sales pitch describing what you do to the listener.
  – Don’t just provide your title, describe your impact.
  – The elevator pitch should be engaging enough to make the listener want to know more about what you do.
• Make sure your posture is good.
• Make eye contact.
• Remember to smile.
What Should I Say?

• Ask engaging questions.
• Find out when the company will be conducting the first or second round of interviews for the position.
• Ask how soon they would like to make a final hiring decision.
The Outcome

• Make an impression.
• The exchange.
• Provide the opportunity to follow up.
• Expand your network.
Join relevant APUS LinkedIn Groups

http://www.apus.edu/about-us/communities.htm