



Family Member Employment

How to Work a Job Fair

The Resume Question

I am confused. On the one hand I am told that I should target my resume to every position I apply for. On the other, I am instructed to bring multiple copies of my resume to hand out to the many prospective employers at job fairs. These two sets of advice seem to conflict.

The Response

Though, whenever possible, you will want to target your resume to any job that you are applying for, you should always have a generic copy of your resume on hand, and bring copies of this resume with you to any job fair you attend. Employers attend job fairs to fill not only immediate but also anticipated job openings. Also, contractors, both government and private sector, may need your resume in order to bid on contracts. Some would see this as a resume collection effort only and resent that their resume is being used to bid on a contract that they may never have the opportunity to work on. Keep in mind, however, that in order for a company to bid on and be awarded a contract it is necessary to show that they have a ready pool of qualified workers to tap into. And, if they don't get the contract you are certainly not going to get the job.

If it is an organization that you would be interested in working with, even if they do not have immediate openings, providing a generic copy of your resume will allow you to be considered for future openings.

However, if an organization is recruiting for a specific position that you are particularly interested in ask if you can forward them a copy of your resume. No need to be coy about this, they know the game. Tell the representative that you would like to tailor your resume so that it will contain the information that they need to determine if you would be considered as a potential candidate for the position. Remember to ask for a copy of the representative's business card if they don't offer you one. Follow up as soon as possible afterward by forwarding a cover letter with a note thanking them for their time and the copy of your resume.

Developing an Elevator Speech

Below is a link to an informative piece on how to put together an elevator speech, or marketing pitch, for yourself. Although the examples of speeches provided

tend to focus more what the individual has done, rather than ***what he or she can do for the organization**, they do provide some food for thought as you are compiling your own speech.

An additional suggestion is to consider what you feel your main areas of expertise are, usually 3 or 4, and build on these categories. Next, envision how an organization may leverage your expertise and how you may apply your knowledge and skills to the advantage of an organization. Remember, the person that you are marketing yourself to has one main question in mind- "what benefit will our organization gain from hiring this person?" If they have to analyze you to make this determination, unless you have a very high demand skill set, they will probably not see you as the right person for the job.

The "pitch wizard," although very basic, gives one a good start place to start in developing your marketing pitch. <http://www.15secondpitch.com/new/index.asp>

Be sure to also click on the links for Fantastic Formulas for Composing Elevator Speeches and Elevator Speech Do's and Don'ts in the following article. http://www.quintcareers.com/job-search_elevator_speech.html

Job Fairs - <http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21660.htm>

How to Work A Job Fair - <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/75633.pdf>

March 26, 2007