

## Job Fair Preparations

### Why go to a job fair?

- ◆ Allows you to make face to face contacts with employers.
- ◆ Provides opportunities to collect business cards and obtain a list of contact for networking and job opportunities.
- ◆ To hear first-hand from employers how your **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS**, and, **ABILITIES** might meet their needs or the needs in today's workplace.
- ◆ Identify new trends and innovations in business impacting career and career development.

### Proper preparation is crucial!

**Research the Companies:** Go on line and find out the names of the participating companies. Find out information about their products, services, new initiatives, history, and competitors.

**Resumes:** Have plenty of resumes prepared with either an "Objective Statement" noting your job or career target or simply placing one or two words above your "Skills Statement."

**Prepare Questions:** Prepare a number of questions for employers: what skills and education are they looking for; what chief challenges they deal with in their market or industry; and/or how he/she would describe the corporate culture.

**Elevator Speech (Mini Commercial):** An elevator speech is used in networking and consists of an introduction; notes the occupation and industry you are interested in; and a brief summary of the related knowledge, skills, accomplishments, and experiences you possess. It should last approximately 15—20 seconds. Use direct eye contact and a firm handshake.

## Initial Impressions & Presentation

### Impression Management

Right or wrong, all of us form very strong opinions based on first impressions. It is important to note that such opinions are hard to change and are magnified when formed within the context of a job interview or a meeting at a job fair. Why? It is quite simple, as the employer is trying to determine if candidate will fit in the organization from a technical/professional perspective or in organizational culture. Culture refers to shared values, beliefs, and how things get done.

### Manner of Speech

**Never** address an employer as “Dude.” Are you aware that the word dude is an Irish word meaning a stupid and foolish person?

Do you speak in a manner that is consistent with a professional demeanor? Do you use correct grammar? Do you speak and carry yourself in a manner that is consistent with the image this company wishes to present to customers?

### Asking About Wages & Benefits

**Never** ask about wages and benefits, either in an interview or at a job fair, unless the employer brings it up or an offer is on the table.

## Dress to Impress!

### Job Fair Dress Code

The rule of thumb for interviews is to dress one step above the requirements of the position. However, job fairs are a networking opportunity and a professional setting. One should be dressed neatly and professionally—suit and tie for men and a business suit for women. The message candidates want to send is one of competence and intelligence.

**Men** should use dark conservative colors such as black, navy, or dark gray.

**Women** may use the same colors as men but brown is also acceptable.

### Interview Clothing Keeping Costs Down

Interview clothing can be obtained at a reasonable cost by shopping thrift stores or bulk and wholesale liquidators. Thrift stores are great sources of lightly used or even brand new dress clothes at very low prices. A recent search found that clothing for an interview could be easily purchased from such stores for under \$50.00.