

## HOW TO EFFECTIVELY WORK A JOB FAIR

Not too long ago, while being an observer at a job fair, I overheard the following comments between two visitors who were exiting:

*"This job fair was an absolute waste of my time!"*

*"I got a lot out of this job fair."*



Well, what do you think of these two extreme opinions?

Which group would you like to be in, the first one or the second one?

The preparation before attending a job fair is very important.

My guess is that the first person had not prepared for the job fair but the second one had. You cannot expect to stroll through a job fair, as if it was a country fair, and expect to land a job! Less than 10% of attendees adequately prepare for a job fair. The people who *do* prepare have a 90% probability of success.

Many of my clients ask me the same question: *"Should I attend the upcoming job fair?"*

My answer is always a qualified, *"Yes!"*

What do I mean by that?

**Your preparation before attending a job fair is crucial ...  
... the difference between a successful experience and an utter waste of time!!!**

FIRST AND FOREMOST, STUDY THE LIST OF COMPANIES THAT WILL BE PRESENT AT THE JOB FAIR. This type of list is usually available online, or in print - usually newspapers. *You must first determine if these companies represent the types of jobs you are interested in.* For example, if the population of companies for a particular job fair is in the field of banking or insurance, *you probably won't want to attend if you're in Healthcare or an engineer.*

You need to have a game plan or a set of goals when attending a job fair. It is perfectly acceptable to have "networking" and "obtaining experience in working a job fair" as your immediate goals.

Before attending the appropriate job fair, you need to pre-register so that you don't waste valuable time waiting in line to fill out forms at the last minute. Try to get as much information as you can on the exhibiting companies. Go to their websites and look at their open jobs in their careers section. A systematic investigation of prospective companies can yield better results than plodding through the entire fair. You may not even have enough time to go through the whole fair. *A systematic, targeted approach is better than a buckshot one.*

Bring at least 50 of your *presentation quality* résumés (on good paper). Make sure they are totally error-free! Put together a portfolio of your past work, if appropriate. Make sure you use '*sanitized*' copies in this portfolio, without exposing the names of companies you worked for. If you don't, it means that you don't respect company confidentialities. The new prospective companies take this as a danger signal, and may not even call you in for an interview, even if you were the most qualified.

You should have your personal infomercial (30/60/90/120-second elevator speech or sound bite) down pat, and has to sound natural. Think through carefully all the answers to typical and atypical interview questions. Many good books are available on this subject.

**Strategize a list of relevant and intelligent questions to ask about the company.**

Make sure you are well organized the night before the job fair, including proper business attire. Don't even dream of jeans and sneakers!

***You get only one chance to make the first impression.***

To obtain maximum benefit from the job fair, it is imperative that you arrive a little early and get oriented to the layout, prior to entering the fair. The interviewers and the candidates are more alert during the early morning hours. A slump is usually experienced during lunch hours and the last hour before closing. It is a mistake to hurriedly drop off copies of résumés and pick up business cards during your lunch hour, if you are employed. You may really need to take a day off, with or without pay, since attending this fair is an important event to advance your career.

The old adage, "*You get only one chance to make a first impression*" is so true! You need to be courteous, polite, and engaging with your body language. A firm handshake, a smile, and looking directly into the interviewer's eyes, all go a long way! Try to convey a positive, enthusiastic and optimistic attitude. Make sure you have all the contact information before you depart from the company's table. Take detailed notes and find out the next steps in the hiring process. *Make sure that you get business cards from each and every person that you speak with.*

A word of caution. You are here to make useful contacts and gain additional *first-hand* intel on relevant companies. You are **not** here to secure the job offer. You have to be employer oriented and not self-centered. Emphasize the benefits you can offer the employer. **Do not discuss salary and benefits issues!** They come much later in the hiring process.

Don't be a lone wolf or an island! This is a perfect opportunity to network with other professionals who are also job-seekers. You never know when you will receive an excellent job search tip, or are able to make another person's day by completing their crossword puzzle.

Don't be discouraged if you don't get a job offer after attending a single fair. This is a numbers game! Take a salesperson's perspective and attend the next job fair.

Your work is not over yet!

The same day of the fair, at night, you need to write separate thank-you notes to each and every one of the recruiters you met. It is not just a bread-and-butter note, but your last chance to market yourself by citing another one or two examples which you may have forgotten to bring up, but are relevant to the job you are applying for. By writing these notes, you will stand out from the herd! You would be surprised to hear that these thank-you notes can make or break you, because so few candidates write them. These can be emailed or sent through regular mail. *Handwritten notes make an even better impact in modern times.* Neatly organize all materials in individual folders by company. Develop a follow-up plan to stay in contact with the company recruiters. A phone call every week or two is not inappropriate, because it shows your continuing interest in the company.

Don't be discouraged if you don't get a job offer after attending a single fair. This is a numbers game! Take a salesperson's stance {Every NO brings you closer to the next YES} and attend the next job fair. *Good luck!*

## Helping Professionals On ALL Levels

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Mark Berkowitz is the owner and President of CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES, LLC. Changing lives and revolutionizing careers since 1985, Mark provides one-on-one career consulting services, résumé building assistance and guidance to help each client achieve not only job advancement, but lasting and meaningful success in their career path as well. A distinguished figure in his field, Berkowitz is one of the top career builders in the country and has been quoted in nearly two dozen books and publications on the topic of career advancement.

Passionate about empowering others to realize their dreams, Mark served as an executive board member of the PROFESSIONAL ASSN. OF RÉSUMÉ WRITERS & CAREER COACHES. He has been helping clients successfully advance in, and/or change their careers for over 36 years. With a Master's Degree in Career Development and four specialized certifications ([National Certified Career Counselor](#), [Certified Professional Résumé Writer](#), [Int'l Certified Job & Career Transition Coach](#), and [Certified Employment Interview Professional](#)), he is uniquely qualified to help you improve your career situation. A recognized expert in the field, he had not only taught in Graduate Schools and led workshops and seminars, but also trained other counselors. Mark served as chairman of the Certification Board for the Professional Assn. of Résumé

Writers and Career Coaches and was a founding board member of the Career Management Alliance (fka Career Masters Institute). Additionally, he has shared his expertise in effectively utilizing career assessment tools with graduate counseling students from nearby Fordham University, helping to prepare them for their future counseling careers.

Mark connects with clients locally as well as international clients via the internet. He also provides outreach to high school and college students, presenting career planning and job search strategy workshops.

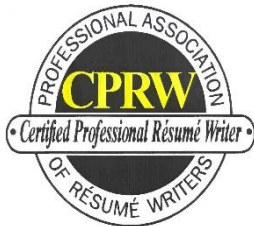
- Highly regarded with résumés, cover letters, and interview strategies showcased in nearly two dozen books.

- Enjoys an INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION as a “Résumé Guru” by members of the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches.

His work appears in nearly two dozen books on résumé /cover letter writing and winning interview strategies. He has been spotlighted on WCBS television in “*Acing The Interview*” and has been named as the “*Professional of the Year 2024*” by the **PODCAST BUSINESS NEWS NETWORK**.



Berkowitz has been recognized as “... *one of the leading résumé writers in the U.S. today*” in Professional Résumés for Executives, Managers, and Other Administrators. Wendy Enelow, President of the Career Masters Institute has acknowledged Mark as “... *one of the most talented career counselors I have ever met.*”



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*See how you can benefit from professional expertise  
instead of suffering from your career mistakes.*