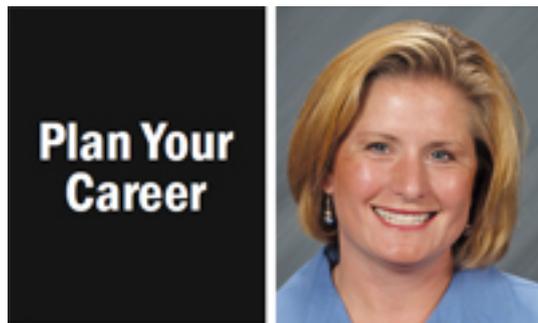


Nice work at the job fair

Written by Julie Desmond
Wednesday, 08 February 2012 14:52



By Julie Desmond
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Last week's job fair was packed. Hundreds of ambitious, well-dressed, earnest people of all ages and abilities met with a few dozen employers for extreme speed dating, the Hire Me version. Competition for jobs is tough, but the people at this job fair were up to the task.

What impressed this employer was the level of professionalism of every candidate. For instance, Dinyar had a sturdy handshake. Some men think they have to be placid or just shake the fingertips of a female. Dinyar took my hand in his, palm to palm, gave it an appropriate squeeze and let go. This seems a small point, but a handshake can communicate confidence. Practice.

At job fairs, people sometimes come as they are, jeans, t-shirts, whatever. An employer can sometimes guess pretty accurately by looking at someone whether she is in accounting, customer service or a custodian. Not at this job fair. This time, everyone got the same memo, apparently, and dressed to the nines. Button down shirts, ties, sweaters or jackets, nice pants and shoes, neat hair, no hats. Will Earl, a custodian, have a better chance at employment because he showed up in a neat shirt and tie? I think so. He's not going to wear his Sunday best on the job, but his clothes communicate his ability to plan ahead as well as his commitment to making a positive impression in front of potential employers.

Robin stood out because she carried a notebook. When an employer suggested she email her resume, Robin whipped out a pen and her notebook and wrote down the employer's name, company name, email address and – this was impressive – she wrote, "email resume." One would expect Robin to visit with as many as fifty potential employers at a job fair; one would not expect her to remember every conversation. Therefore, writing a note to herself was a smart move. She happened to be one of just a few job fair attendees who actually remembered to email a resume as requested. Actions communicate intentions. It's okay to take notes when talking to people about job opportunities.

The goal of a job fair is to move employers and candidates efficiently on to the interview stage. It's one place where professionalism will definitely pay off.

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