

Finding confidence and contacts at conferences and trade shows

Written by Julie Desmond
Monday, 18 June 2012 16:05

Anna writes, "I won a fellowship to attend a weeklong conference. I am overwhelmed. My resume is pending critique from the career services department at school, I am waiting to find out which companies will be at the conference so I can figure out how to woo them into hiring me, and I have finals right when I come back. I know this conference will be highly educational but I am most nervous about how to dress business casual. I should be studying my wind power and electrical engineering knowledge, but I am more worried about finding shoes to go with the suit my sister sent me. The whole concept is foreign to me!" Best answer, from one of my co-workers: "Dear Anna, it is normal to worry about appearances and I am happy to talk through that dumb stuff with you, but remember that you are a beautiful and intelligent person. Allow your genuine self to shine through. You will find great people at this conference and you will run into a couple phonies. When you do, you'll say to yourself, Oh, that's what she meant. "

At a conference, people do not expect you to have all the answers. Go in planning to ask questions. Get centered, get interested and if your confidence wavers, take a quick look at what other people are wearing because, I promise, they had the same quandary you had while packing.

When you meet people: wear your nametag but also state your name every time you meet someone new. Look at others' nametags and use them. A sticky nametag goes on the right. Most right-handed people put it on their left shoulder, but not you because you know that when a person shakes your hand, his eye travels naturally up your right arm to your face. Make it easy for someone to call you by name. Simple, but it can set you apart from the crowd.

When you want to meet people: never sit alone at a meal or event. Even when empty seats abound, you sidle right up next to someone, introduce yourself and ask them how they are enjoying the conference. This leads to pleasant conversations, good days, new contacts, and possibly new friends.

If you're smart: don't drink. Even if a drink with friends is something you enjoy. After six o'clock at a weeklong conference, cold beers or cocktails will not improve your life. Attend, enjoy, but abstain. Try this the first night, and by ten o'clock or so you'll be observing your new friends with either humor or horror and saying, Oh, that's what she meant.

Finding confidence and contacts at conferences and trade shows

Written by Julie Desmond
Monday, 18 June 2012 16:05

Julie Desmond is a Certified Staffing Professional. Leave comments online or write to julie@lakeregionstaffing.com.