

# MAKING THE MOST OF A CAREER FAIR OR NETWORKING EVENT

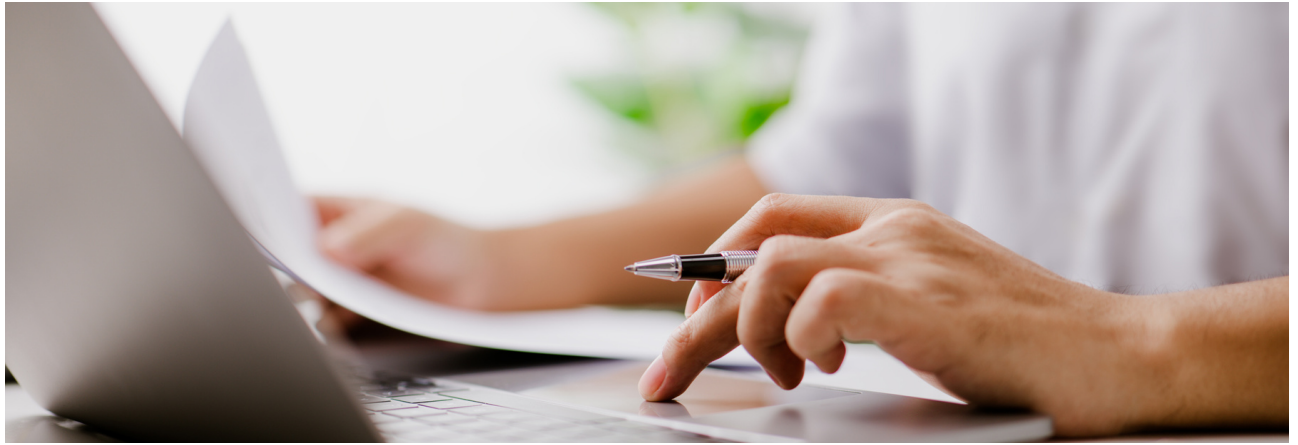


**LESSONS** ★ ★ ★  
**LEARNED<sub>FOR</sub>VETS**  
**PODCAST** ★ [www.llforvets.com](http://www.llforvets.com)

BY LORI NORRIS

# BEFORE THE CAREER FAIR OR NETWORKING EVENT

**In a job search where there is very little human interaction, a career fair or networking event - whether virtual or in-person - can be a very effective job search tool.**



## Get Your Resume Ready

Think of your resume as your paper calling card to leave behind with the recruiter. A resume is your marketing brochure; what does yours say about you and the value you can offer your new employer? A resume can't get you a job, but it can certainly prevent you from getting the opportunity to even interview for that job!

- Determine your career focus
- Translate your military skills and job descriptions
- Focus your resume on a specific target with relevant skills highlighted
- Submit your resume and preregister for the event if it's an option

## Conduct Your Research

Preparation is the key to success. Before you attend the career fair, know who will be there and what is available. Don't count a company out before you do your research. A restaurant chain with a booth at the career fair may be hiring much more than waitresses and busboys; they may have accounting or information technology positions. Don't ask "what does your company do?" instead demonstrate your knowledge of the company and its needs. Research:

- What companies will be attending?
- What job openings do those companies have available?
- Choose 3-5 target companies and gather information about their needs and mission
- Discover talking points and identify questions about the company that you can discuss with recruiters from your target companies

## Create Your Self-introduction

Check out the worksheet at the end of this handout to create the outline for an icebreaker introduction and conversation starter.

# DURING THE CAREER FAIR OR NETWORKING EVENT



## **A few keys to success for the day of the event:**

- Bring plenty of copies of your resume, including customized resumes for your top 5 companies
- Develop a “plan of attack” to meet the recruiters of your target companies but be sure to walk the entire career fair
- Be respectful of the recruiter’s time
- Don’t load up on all the free giveaways
- Gather business cards and/or email addresses
- Dress as though you were going for a job interview
- Communicate with confidence
- Network with other job seekers and recruiters



# AFTER THE CAREER FAIR OR NETWORKING EVENT



## **A few keys to success after the event:**

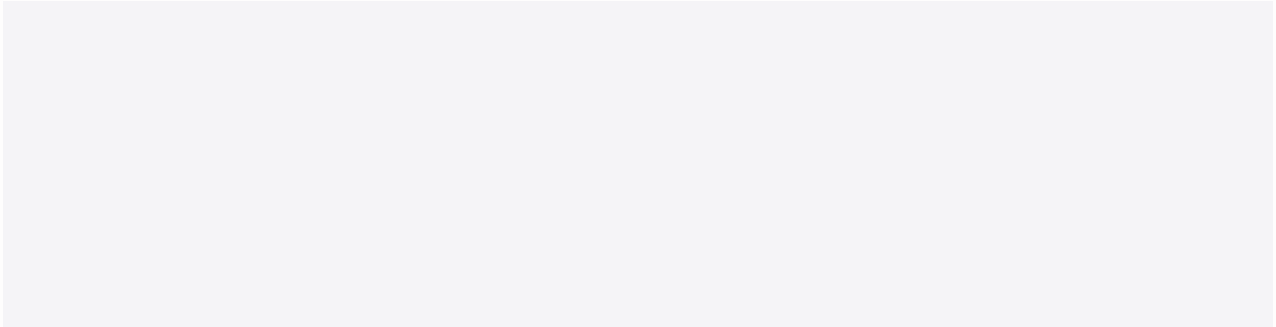
- Follow up via email, thank you note or phone within the first few days
- Send LinkedIn connection requests to stay in touch.
- Send a personalized message to your new LinkedIn connections reminding them of a conversation you had at the event.
- Request additional information
- Express your interest in working for the organization
- Submit your resume and cover letter if they did not take it at the career fair

# PERSONAL INTRODUCTION CREATION WORKSHEET

**Remember, this is a conversation - NOT a monologue!**

**Hello, my name is (YOUR NAME). I was researching your company online and I found...**

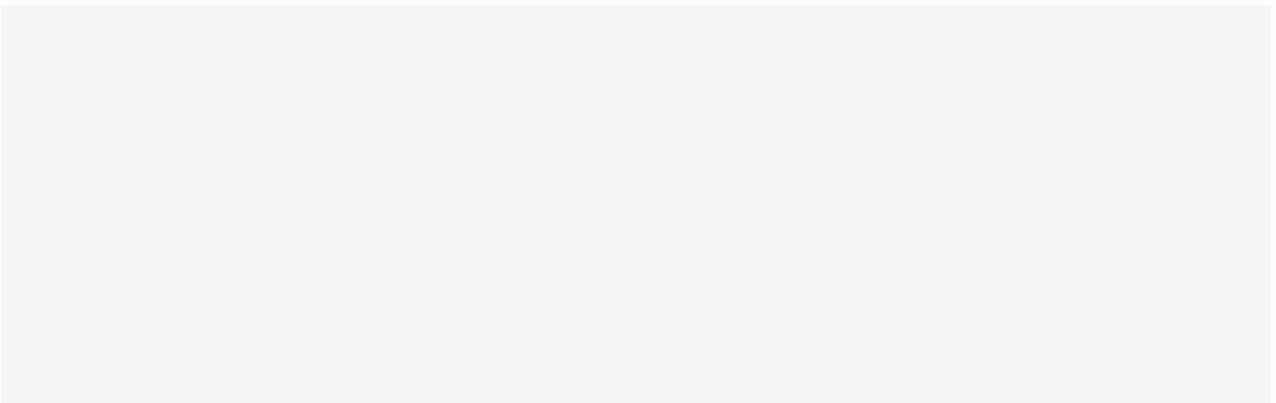
What kinds of positions are they hiring for? What is happening in their organization? What are their needs or problems?



EXAMPLE: Hello, my name is John Smith. I was on your website yesterday and I saw that you are looking for a safety manager to oversee a new warehouse location you are opening early next year.

**I am... My background includes...**

Discuss your expertise, your career focus and education as relevant to the position of interest with their company. Offer scope and numbers such as years of experience, number of personnel managed, etc.



EXAMPLE: I am a safety program manager who excels at preventing injury through education and standardized procedures. As a USAF veteran, I oversaw safety programs for organizations with up to 350 personnel.

# PERSONAL INTRODUCTION CREATION WORKSHEET

**Remember, this is a conversation - NOT a monologue!**

## **I can bring value by.....**

Remember to focus on the employer and their needs or problems. Position yourself as the solution and discuss how you can be a cost-effective employee. When possible use an example or accomplishment to demonstrate value.

EXAMPLE: In my last organization, I reduced reportable incidents by 27% and prevented hazards by identifying the most common root cause of incidents. I am looking forward to bringing these skills to add value to my next employer.

## **I would really like...**

Don't forget the "call to action" to open a discussion of what will happen next.

EXAMPLE: I would really like to pursue a safety management position with your organization. Are you currently accepting applications for this role here today? Can you give me some insight into what skills and qualifications you are seeking for this role? Would it be okay to send you a LinkedIn connection request and follow up with you in the next few weeks after I submit my application?