



Networking Event Preparation--Be Prepared and Polished!

Your résumé is polished and ready to go...what's the next step? Your résumé is your initial tool to make a first impression and now you have a networking event opportunity. The next critical step is being equally polished for the networking event. Here are some following steps to take to prepare you for a networking with any employer.

1. Gather as much information as you can about the organization. Some of the information you should know often can be found by making a trip to the organization's website or annual report if the company is publicly traded. Learn the following:
 - a) What products or services do they offer?
 - b) Where do they distribute their products and/or services?
 - c) Who are their primary customers?
 - d) Who are their primary competitors?
 - e) What is their mission? Vision? What do you know about their culture?
 - f) Google the company; look for news updates that might not be on their website.
2. Gather as much information about the internship or job you are applying for in the upcoming meeting. Specific facts you should learn:
 - a) Review the description and know what role this position plays in the hiring manager's department. *Apply for the position electronically if possible.*
 - b) Who'll be at the event? When invited, if possible try to understand who will be attending from the organization. Go to LinkedIn and try to find the individuals. Learn their names carefully.
 - c) Identify how your courses can benefit the company. For instance, if this is an Accounting internship and you have just completed a major project in your Audit class, learn how you can "transfer" what you learned in the project to the internship. If you have work samples from a previous internship, take them with you.

If other students have interned there before, contact them for information and input -
 - d) be resourceful!

3. Google yourself—what will they have learned about you?
 - a) If you are not on LinkedIn, develop a well-written profile and join! You will need a professional “head shot,” no “Facebook” style photos.
 - b) Click here for a quick review of “LinkedIn” Profiles, <http://www.igrad.com/articles/linkedin-profile-for-recent-graduate-college-student>. There are numerous resources to help you build a great profile! Post your resume on your profile as well.
 - c) Consider updating security settings on your Facebook account so that previous photos posted by friends will not be visible. Manage your social media well to avoid any unfavorable images.
4. Prepare for the event.
 - a) Have extra copies of your résumé in a portfolio (approx. \$15), even if you emailed it before.
 - b) Have multiple copies of your resumes, suggest 15-20 for a large event so that you can distribute to those you meet as appropriate.
 - c) Prepare your “elevator or personal branding speech” so that you can introduce yourself easily.
 - d) Identify what you will wear and have it ready—pressed and cleaned. Plan when you will change if the event is at the end of the day and you have class or work.
5. Get the logistics down!
 - a) Review the invitation and be sure you know where you are going.
 - b) Take a trial run the day before and drive by so you’re sure where it is located.
 - c) Arrive 5-10 minutes before the event. If you are on time, you are late!
 - d) Dress like the job you want to have—shoes should be polished, correct “professional dress” even if they are business casual. Err on the side of being overdressed, not underdressed.
 - e) Be cordial and pleasant to everyone you meet at the event.
 - f) Turn off your cell phone! Do not text or answer calls during the event!
 - g) When the event is over, that day, send a well-written and proofed thank you email to your interviewer (s). If possible, follow-up with a handwritten note. Be sure to spell all names correctly—even if you have to call and ask the receptionist to help you! Use courtesy titles until they indicate you can use first names.

What is the importance of networking events?

Employers use networking events to get a more informal perspective of candidates. Often, this type of event is a way for them to “advance candidates” in their recruiting process. They will be observing how you:

- a) Interact with others—are you confident?
- b) Present yourself-are you comfortable as you introduce yourself?
- c) Answer questions about your skills, your classes, and their organization. Do you know the company’s products? Do you know where they operate? Are they global? If so, what countries do they operate in currently?

Don’t expect that “winging it” will get you the results you want. Take some time to think through your invitation and the event. Make the most of this opportunity to present your talents and skills to your advantage!

*Be prepared, be polished, and be professional
and you will feel good about your time at the event!*