

NETWORKING EVENT QUICK TIPS

Making the Most of a Job Fair

BEFORE THE EVENT: PREPARE!

Who will be there? Find the list of attending attorneys. Answer these questions:

- Where are their offices located?
- What are their practice areas?
- Who do they hire?
 - Class year? Are they looking for people with particular backgrounds or qualifications?

Make a priority list and action plan.

- Who do you want to meet with the most?
- What are your goals?
- Will you contact anyone ahead of time?
- What is your strategy for finding people at the event?

Research the contacts that interest you.

- Look to websites of attorneys' employers; Lexis or Westlaw, Martindale.com; and Google

Develop thoughtful questions.

- Make sure your questions reflect your interest as well as your advance preparation.
- Prioritize your questions: if it turns out that you only have time for a few questions, which ones will you ask? If you have a lot of time, have you come prepared with enough questions to keep a good conversation going?

Prepare your introduction (Elevator Speech).

- A few examples:
- "Hi, I'm Susie Student and I'm very interested in sports law, specifically _____. I [majored in/had an internship in] _____ at [school/organization] and have continued with this focus in law school."
- "I'm Joe Student. I was excited to find out you were coming today, because I would like to practice sports law I have been impressed with the cases that come out of your agency."
- After your introduction, give a short (one to three sentences) summary of your background, accomplishments, and goals. Set expectation for follow-up: "I'd love to contact you to talk more."

Get your marketing materials ready.

- Make sure your resume is perfect and up to date. Have it handy just in case.
- Prepare other documents (cover letters, references, writing samples) if appropriate.

AT THE EVENT: MAXIMIZE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS

Dress in business attire.

- Dress on the high end of the official attire for the conference. This usually means you should wear a business suit.
- If the attire is business casual, dress as you would in an office setting. Even if you're talking with an attorney who is wearing jeans, your appearance should show the seriousness of your interest in building your practice area and getting to know attorneys in the field.

Greet contacts warmly; introduce yourself.

- Smile. Shake hands firmly. Make eye contact. (Your body language conveys a message; enthusiasm is an essential element of success in both informational and job interviews.)
- Breaking into a conversation: Wait until there is a break in the conversation and then introduce yourself to the group. This can feel intimidating but once you've done it a few times, it gets easier.

Ask questions.

- Show sincere interest. One employer who has participated in many career fairs/conferences told us that she can tell immediately who is truly interested in her program.
- Be flexible. You may only have a minute or two in front of a particular attorney, or you may have plenty of time. Plan your strategies for both scenarios.
- Take your cue from the attorney. Watch for non-verbal signals that you should wind up the conversation or that the employer wants to talk with you more.

Ask for business cards.

- Wait until the end of a conversation and an opportunity to have established a reason to make further contact before you ask for a business card.
- Once you move away from a conversation, make notes on the back of the card of the event, date, and reminders of the conversation.

Have fun!

The art of networking has a lot to do with being relaxed and enjoying your interactions.

AFTER THE EVENT: FOLLOW UP

Send thank-you notes.

- In your thank-you note (e-mail or regular mail), refer to some part of your conversation with the attorney, and try to mention a way in which this person was helpful to you.
