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How to Stand Out After a Career Fair

1. Follow up with a sincere thank you letter – a prompt, sincere thank you note can make all the difference. A thank you note is common after interviews, but the number of employers that actually receive one after a career fair is very small. Employers are more and more interested in a candidate's writing skills. The thank you note could be one way a job seeker is judged so it shouldn't be taken lightly.

Do's and Don'ts of a solid thank you note.

- Do: Be prompt
 - Start drafting your thank you note immediately after you met with an employer, while it's still fresh in your mind, and send it out ASAP – preferably within 24 hours of the interview/meeting.
 - A hand-written note shows that you took the time to write and comes off a little more personal. If your hand-writing is hard to read, definitely go with e-mail.
- Do: Make it specific and keep it succinct
 - Thank you notes shouldn't be much more than three paragraphs. Strive to address specific points that you and the recruiter discussed. There should be something in the thank you note that indicates you were listening to what the recruiter had to say.
- Do: Follow this structure
 - Paragraph 1: Express your gratitude by saying something like, "Thanks for taking the time to meet with me at the career fair on Thursday. I appreciated hearing more about the position at XYZ company"
 - Paragraph 2: Reiterate why you're a perfect candidate for the job. What experience/skills or abilities can you bring to the company? The goal is to communicate that you understand the hiring manager's needs for the position, and you want to underscore how your experience makes you a perfect match.
- Do: Avoid spelling and grammatical errors

- A thank you note with spelling and grammatical errors will completely undermine your job search efforts. Remember, the thank you note presents hiring managers with an opportunity to evaluate your written communication skills. Make sure to read through the thank you note after writing it.
- 2. Recruiters often base their decisions on a candidate's follow through, which is why writing a thank you letter is crucial. Typically, recruiters have hundreds of candidates to filter through so always send the letter within one to three days after a fair so you are contacting them before they contact you.
- 3. Maintain contact – perseverance is a good thing. The traditional time to follow up with employers after sending a thank you letter is between ten days and two weeks. After that, follow up again in three to four weeks – one message every two to four weeks, but no more. If you don't hear from them after the second attempt, move on.

Don't get discouraged if a company never responds. Sometimes big companies need more than three to four weeks, and sometimes they will only respond to candidates they are interested in. This doesn't mean you should call them every day or week to check on the status of your application.