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Directing Your Job Search at the Annual Meeting

By Pearl Freier

Searching for your next job can often seem like a full-time job in itself. There are many methods for this “madness,” however, conferences like the upcoming AAPS Annual Meeting and Exposition stand out from the other traditional job searching resources. Conferences provide an excellent meeting ground for you and your next potential employer. You can always wait until you arrive at the conference and plan your activities at the Career Center. Or you can do some planning in advance of the conference. Some planning could help you attend with a sense of direction for your job search and maximize your time at this event.

1. Determine your goals.

Start this planning process by establishing some goals for yourself. Write down your personal goals, your professional goals, and your goals for the conference. Many jobseekers show up at the Career Center and ask the employer to consider them for any position at their company. They are looking for the employer to help them identify the right position for them. While an employer can do this occasionally, most of the time it doesn't work. And your résumé remains in their pile.

2. Target prospective employers.

Before you arrive, put together your target list of potential employers and the positions for which you are qualified and which are of interest. If you are not sure, have some conversations with colleagues, alumni, professors, or anyone who can advise you. When you show up at the conference, you need to be able to have a focused discussion with the employers you meet. Instead of giving an impression of confusion, you need to be in the best position possible to present yourself and to ask educated questions. This is your first opportunity to meet with this particular company; make the most of it.

3. Expand your network.

Next, think about ways you can expand your network at this conference. You may not be able to rely solely on the Career Center and the website as your source for job leads. It's always a good idea to look through the program before you leave for the conference and check in with some colleagues who you

haven't seen in awhile who may be attending the conference. You can't count on running into people you know at the conference: it may not happen or it's often a rushed exchange. Call or email them in advance and arrange a time to get together. Also think about people you know: colleagues, professors, or alumni who may be able to make introductions for you at the conference to people you would like to meet.

4. Create a tracking system.

Lastly, make sure you have a system to keep track of all your networking and interviewing activities both at and following the conference. Make sure you have a place to keep all the business cards you collected and a place to keep track of the conversations you had. Having the ability to follow up after conferences is key, otherwise these can be opportunities lost. The Career Center Pocket Guide is an ideal tool to assist you with this. Taking some extra planning steps before a conference can help you arrive with a sense of purpose and confidence in the midst of the chaos that surrounds many job seekers at conferences and career centers.



This is the third year executive search consultant Pearl Freier will be at the AAPS Annual Meeting Career Center providing advice ranging from interviewing tips to résumé advice. Appointments can be made online at the AAPS Online Career Network at www.aapspharmaceutica.com/careercenter.

Ms. Freier will be presenting “Marketing Yourself to Your Future Employer,” Monday, November 8th at the AAPS Annual Meeting and Exposition - part of our newest professional development track.