EAST MISSISSIPPI JOB FAIR
SURVIVAL GUIDE

JOB FAIR PREPARATION

1. **YOUR RESUME**
   Is your resume customized to the job, company, or career field you are applying? Is your resume brief, easy to read, professional, and on target? Have you had your resume proofed? Are resume copies clear, clean, and straight? Do you have enough copies prepared?

2. **YOUR DRESS**
   Are you dressed to make the best impression? Attire should be conservative and professional. Clothing should be neat, clean, and pressed. Shoes and socks should be neat and clean. Wear conservative, minimal jewelry. Do not wear caps. Do not wear social attire. Do not wear clothes that are too tight, too short, or seductive. If in doubt about what is proper attire, ask your instructor or other professional.

3. **PERSONAL GROOMING**
   Are you well groomed? Have you bathed? Is your hair neat, clean, and combed? Brushed your teeth? Cleaned your hands? Cleaned and clipped your fingernails? Shaved? Put on deodorant? Are you wearing too much cologne or perfume? Use scents sparingly or not at all. Some people are allergic to fragrances. Don’t laugh! Employers say these are common mistakes job applicants make.

4. **OTHER IMPORTANT TIPS**
   Turn off your cell phone. Speak clearly, enunciate words, and use proper English. Make eye contact. Use good posture. Have a firm handshake. Smile and be friendly. Listen carefully to what a prospective employer says. Do not interrupt. Bring a conservative looking notebook, pad, and pen to take notes. Exude confidence. Complete job applications completely, accurately, and neatly. Remember, you are marketing yourself as a professional. First impressions count!

5. **DON'TS**
   Do not bring a child with you. Do not have a friend or family member join you who is just hanging out or inappropriately dressed. Do not chew gum. Do not arrive close to the end of the job fair, if possible, as some vendors leave early.

6. **PREPARE TO TALK TO EMPLOYERS**
   Have you developed your introduction? You should state your name and program of study. Tell something about the skills, certifications, or degrees you have that could help the employer. Do you have good grades? Good class attendance? Transferable skills? Served in any leadership positions? Won any awards? Participated in any team competitions? Be sure you have practiced your interviewing skills ahead of time!

7. **FREE ONLINE RESOURCES**
   Go to the EMCC website to find out what vendors have registered and what jobs the vendors have posted. Research them by going online, personal contacts, and printed materials. Also, go online to find free job seeker resources on topics such as resumes, proper attire, interview skills, transferable skills, marketing yourself, and effective networking. The MS Department of Employment Security, Jobs in MS, and Monster.com are examples of good sites.
JOB FAIR PRESENTATION

1. GET A SENSE OF THE ENVIRONMENT
   Register and review any job fair handouts. Get comfortable with the environment. Walk around and notice where everything is. Do not get in any lines yet.

2. MAP OUT YOUR STRATEGY
   Go over the employer listing and determine the employers you want to meet. Place numbers next to the employers in order of importance to you and your job search goals. Move directly from employer to employer based on the order you’ve marked.

3. NETWORK
   Even if an employer you are interested in is not advertising for someone with your skills, talk to them anyway. If you make a favorable impression, the recruiter may remember you. Vendors often make notes on resumes about candidates that do and do not impress them. When a job for someone with your skills opens at a later date, they may contact you. Network with other job applicants. They may have tips for you.

4. WHEN IT’S YOUR TURN TO TALK WITH THE EMPLOYER
   It all begins with a firm hand shake and a pleasant smile. Introduce yourself and give a quick summary of your skills and goals. Be enthusiastic and professional. Sell yourself. Show how your capabilities satisfy the employer’s job requirements. Also, ask the important questions you need to know to determine if the employer is a good match for you. Do not ask questions about salary, benefits, or vacation days. If they offer this kind of information, that is fine. But you ask these types of questions only after a job offer is made. At the job fair stage, employers are screening job applicants based upon what they determine job applicants can offer them! When finished, immediately jot down notes so you can refresh your memory later.

5. COLLECT WRITTEN MATERIALS
   Employers typically have job descriptions or brochures available at their booths. Take materials from every employer of interest to you. You will find information that can help in customizing any subsequent contact with those employers. Ask for business cards for follow-up.

6. SEND THANK-YOU LETTERS
   Be sure to follow-up by sending “thank you” letters to employers you visited, especially those you have an interest. Thank the employer for taking the time to talk with you. Restate your interest in the company, the position, and your skills. Be sure to proof your letters. You may want someone else to proof your letter also, as it must be error free. Well-written “thank you” letters can tip the scale in your favor.

7. GETTING A JOB IS A JOB! Getting a job takes time, effort, and persistence. Market yourself aggressively every day. Tap all available job search resources, such as college job placement services, instructors, online resources, staffing agencies, newspapers ads, and WIN Job Centers. Remember to network with family, friends, professionals, and any one working at a company you would like to work. Do not get discouraged! Stay positive and stress your capabilities!