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Making the Most of Non-Work Time Seminar
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Job Search Workshop and Information Fair
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Good Morning!

Thank you for the kind introduction and for the invitation to participate on your talented panel.

I also thank each of you for joining us this morning for an exchange of ideas about negotiating the current labor market.

Unlike many of my colleagues, I come with more questions for you than answers. Some of them will undoubtedly tell you what to do in given circumstances, and I recommend that you listen to them because they have the relevant expertise.

My hope is that after you have heard their answers and struggle with a few questions, your thinking about your job transition becomes more focused and directed for optimal results. Here, *optimal results* mean that your new employer and you reap the benefits of the promises you made to each other.

To begin, during your non-work time, consider the following key questions that you may have to address, and the decisions that you may have to make.

Two key questions to address are:

1. *Do I wish to be the person I was in my last job and not make any changes, even though the market has changed?*

If yes, what are the advantages and disadvantages of *not making* any changes?

If no, what are the advantages and disadvantages of *changing* to meet the new demands of the labor market for my experience, skill set, and education?

2. *Do I know what the employers in the sectors/industries that I wish to work for, actually look for in a person with my background?*

The question requires asking other questions before a definitive answer can be produced. Examples are:

- Do I prefer employers in certain sectors or industries such as IT, utilities, retail, management consulting, construction, or healthcare? What are my preferences in rank order?
- Do I prefer employers with a certain culture such as innovative/creative, traditional/bureaucratic, team-based, individual production, entrepreneurial, or task completion orientation?
- What have my previous employers (your managers and their superiors) looked for in new hires and individuals that were promoted on merits?
- Do I see my agreeing to work for an employer as a contract for me to get what *I want and need* and for the employer to get what *it wants and needs*?

At this point, you may be in a position to answer the question about what the employers in your job search area are looking for.

For your information and to get you started, you may be interested in knowing some common attributes that members in a major organization of CEOs considered important. Their overarching requirement was that there be *substance over form*.

Some of their salient requirements included:

- Having competency in performing work in areas you say you are qualified in. Moreover, you have the:
 - Proper education and work experience,
 - Knowledge and skills required to do the work, and
 - Ability to get things done!
- Possessing critical thinking and problem solving skills
- Having an open mind
- Believing in the purpose and values of organization and will work collaboratively with others to perform the work necessary to achieve the goals and mission of the organization
- Maintaining a commitment to and actually performing the work (job) in exchange for money, benefits and valuable experience you should be receiving, including learning and self-development
- Staying focused on and performing relevant work. Performing an excessive amount of personally satisfying internet searches and other activities that add no value is not considered relevant work—unless the position description requires it.

I have presented some questions and talked briefly about what some employers seek in hiring and promoting staff. Since I do not have answers per se, I do have some suggestions for you to ponder:

Suggestions for Consideration

While between jobs, I suggest that you:

1. Get to know your valuable work experience and accomplishments
2. Try to ascertain whether the person you think you are is the person others think you are (now you are asking a profound question)
3. Determine if your effectiveness, efficiency and overall success may improve with some minor changes (e.g., work style and behavior)
4. Prepare a game plan (job transition strategy)
 - a. Articulate a value proposition (good things your employer can count on through your consistent, value-added contributions)
 - b. Package yourself for presentation to prospective employers and intermediaries (also known as your network and insiders)
 - c. Call upon your network (or develop one) for assistance from *insiders*
 - d. Prepare for interviews and game day should you get the call
5. Take advantage of the *Montgomery County One-Stop Career Centers*.
6. When hired, deliver, deliver, deliver! In closing, I wish you much success in working through your questions, applying the answers of my colleagues to your advantage, developing an effective job transition strategy, and re-engineering yourself into a dream position.