

IT Employer Panel & Recruiting Event – Fast Track to IT DOL Grant

Thursday, June 5th, 2014, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Sponsors: Bellevue College Fast Track to IT Grant and Worksource

Summary:

This event was in partnership with local Worksource centers (WIA funded partners). There were 124 attendees: 57 Fast Track to IT students, and 67 “other” (mostly dislocated workers, and a few from other colleges).

Agenda:

1:00 – 2:00 – IT Panel Q&A (see notes below)

2:05 – 2:30 – presentations by Worker Retraining, Worksource, and participant Q&A

2:30 – 4:00 – Employer Fair

IT Employer Panel Participants, with TJ Bajwa as MC

1. AltaSource Group - Chris Bloomquist
2. Automic - Chris Ruocco
3. Robert Half - Michael Zuckermann
4. Tableau - Dave Aydelott
5. WideNet - Joe Rogel

The 5 employers above, plus the 3 listed below, all participated in the Employer Job Fair:

1. Alaska Airlines
2. Chameleon Technologies, Inc.
3. F5 Networks

Other Job Fair Participants/tables:

4. Worker Retraining
5. Academic Advising
6. IBIT (Institution for Business and IT)
7. Worksource
8. FT2IT Grant

IT Panel Q&A, Moderated by TJ Bajwa

Q1 and Q2. Please introduce yourselves and briefly provide background on your company and its services. Also include where you might have openings.

A.1 and A2

Dave Aydelott from Tableau. We are a “big data” company. We’ve grown from 600 employees to 1400 in just the last year. We have offices in Freemont and in Kirkland. We have 300 open positions at the moment. Tableau has about 10 openings in Development/Operations/Network Engineering. We are hiring for lots of positions right now!

Chris Bloomquist from AltaSource – 80% of our open positions are mid-to-senior level jobs. The 20% of remaining jobs that are more entry level are for front desk support, and Tier 2 support positions. We usually hire for mid to senior level roles with some entry level positions.

Chris Ruocco from Atomic – important to develop a positive relationship with your recruiter in order to find the best possible “match” for job opportunities. Atomic has Developer and Cloud technology openings. We are hiring for Automation- related positions.

Joe Rogel from WideNet Consulting – have opportunities for develops and project managers. Employers seek a very specific skill set, so it is important to have a targeted resume, and seek a good match in jobs. Hiring now for Testers, Developers, & Program Managers.

Michael Zuckermann from Robert Half Technology – We tend to look at a person’s skill level and go in that direction. We really try to find a good match between the job seeker & job description = good fit!

Q3. What is your company’s process for applying to these positions (i.e. online application, indeed.com, LinkedIn, etc.) Any tips?

A3.

Interview the recruiter. Ask him/her why they got into recruiting. There are some less-than-reputable recruiters. It’s important to work with one you can trust. If you don’t have a good feeling or relationship with your recruiter, then simply move on to someone else. Recruiters want you to be successful in your job search and interviews – so listen to their advice.

Recommend working with multiple recruiters, but be honest with each one that you are doing that. You don’t want 2 different recruiters submitting your resume for the same job because the hiring company will be confused and will disqualify you.

Be your own best advocate; tell everyone you meet that you are seeking a new opportunity; be as specific as possible.

Resume tip: avoid using the word “expert” on your resume – this is a flag for an interviewer you to challenge you in this area.

Recommend the following resources:

- Meetup.com for networking
- Glassdoor.com – research what others say about a company that is of interest to you
- Indeed.com – list of open jobs

Other tips for interviewing:

- Important to convey passion for what you do, and for what you want to do – no matter what you are doing now.
- If you don't have a lot of work experience, describe projects you are working on, or have worked on in your classes.
- It's easier to get a job offer if you are transitioning to a similar position (to the one you have now).

Q4. What common industry certificates are most IT positions seeking? (i.e. Cisco, Linux+, Microsoft, etc.)

A4. Employers will always hire for experience over certifications.

Only invest in getting an industry certification if you have the passion, and really want to do that. Don't do it because you think the certification will get you a job. Employers will still want to interview you for your experience.

Certifications can be a slight differentiator, and they are a good place to start.

Q5. Any tips for individuals who are changing careers and trying to get their foot in the door in the IT industry (i.e. internships, volunteer work, etc.)

All Employers had similar responses: self-learning (keep learning via YouTube, internet, books, etc.), networking, curiosity, projects, and volunteer opportunities.

Q6. What do you want to see in an IT resume? Any resume tips you can provide the job seekers to make themselves "stand out" from all the other resumes?

A6.

It is important to be very clear about what you want in a job. Be concise.

Some of the panelists like a functional resume – especially for a career -changer. But most of the employers seemed to prefer a chronological resume, because it was easier to read.

Never have more than 2 pages; and even better if you can keep it to one page. Eliminate any experience that is over 15 years "old." Be consistent with the flow, style, font, descriptions, etc.

Use short statements, with bullets. Don't talk about yourself in the first person, and definitely not the third person!

Have at least one other person review your resume before you submit it. You might feel comfortable with it but it's always helpful to have a second pair of eyes – to help you catch an error or something you may have overlooked.

If you are seeking an entry-level position, or do not have much work experience, you might consider listing your interests and passions—that will give a recruiter/hiring manager more information about you.

Review other job descriptions and LinkedIn backgrounds for suggestions on how to describe what YOU do.

If you can, submit your resume in a PDF format, not in Word.

Audience Questions and Panelists Answers:

Q1. I've been in the IT industry for 35 years. Are you (or employers) still interested in someone like me?

A1. Yes, need to show passion!

A1. Reminder—just list the last 15 years of experience on your resume. This is the most relevant.

Q2. What are the best and worst experiences you've had as a recruiter?

A2. I love good placements. Because then I can build a relationship and refer other candidates to the person I've placed.

A2. There are candidates who have been black-listed by some recruiters if they are rude, or if the recruiter has a negative experience.

Q3. Are cover letters necessary when responding to a job opening?

A3. Most recruiters replied “no” and they don't even read them.

Q4. Do employers prefer a generalist, or a specialist when filling a job opening?

A4. Be as specific and as narrow as possible. This will help both the employer and the recruiter – as well as you!

A4. You also need to be able to demonstrate that you have soft skills in addition to technical skills.

Q5. I'm a career-changer? Which resume style is better for me: functional or chronological?

A5. A functional resume is probably the best style for a career-changer.

Other Comments & Tips:

- Research is key:

- Research the company before the interview
 - Research salary info for the position
- LinkedIn + Resume should match and be consistent
- When working with a recruiter:
 - Be professional at all times
 - Be honest about your current employment or unemployment status & job search process
 - Ask questions of recruiters as well as employers, just as they are asking you questions. Interviewing is two ways.
 - Be careful not to burn bridges with a recruiter because it's a small "recruiter" world; they know each other.