

Career Fair Tips

Tips for Successful Career Fairs

Career fairs provide job seekers a way to explore opportunities from many companies in one location. It's a great way to learn about job openings, research companies and practice your interviewing and networking skills.

BEFORE THE FAIR

Do your homework.

Spend time researching the companies at the fair. Employers love talking to candidates who are familiar with their company and business. You'll come across as intelligent and interested.

Get your resume in order.

Create and/or refine your resume and **bring many, many clean, crisp copies** to hand out.

Prepare a sound bite.

Create a one-minute "sound bite" that summarizes your skills, goals, experience, and the kind of company with which you want to associate. Practice this until you are comfortable using this as your opening. Anticipate interview questions and practice your responses.

AT THE FAIR

Plan the day.

Relax and plan on spending time at the fair. Career fairs are not that frequent so plan your time well. Try to avoid standing in long lines. Go early if possible because the first hour is usually the slowest.

Ease into it.

Visit your lower priority companies first. This way you can practice and fine tune your approach. When you are ready, then proceed to the top priority employers on your list.

Keep it lively.

The lines may be daunting, but don't fail to maximize this opportunity. Talk to every company that fits your experience and ambitions. If you meet with 10 recruiters, at the end of the day you will know 10 people by name. That sure beats sending a blind resume to "Personnel Director."

- When you get to actually talk to a company representative, remember to **shake hands firmly and introduce yourself**. This is your chance to make the best first impression.
- **Network!** Talk to both employers and other job candidates. If you are standing in line, don't be shy talk to the people in line. More jobs are filled by networking than any other means.
- **Avoid the shopping spree.** Many companies give out freebies at their booths. It's OK to pick up an item or two, but don't leave the impression that you are shopping for your dorm.

Get the interviewer's business card – and follow up!

If an interview goes well, you will want to follow up with a letter within a couple of days that reinforces the points you made and the facts you learned. Always refer to the date and location of the job fair. Highlight parts of the conversation that stood out to make it easy for them to remember you. Always include a copy of your resume.