



CENTER FOR CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Job Fair

Develop a Strategy

For many job fairs, the website advertising the event will include a list of employers who will participate, and maybe even the positions for which they are recruiting. Look up information about the organizations that interest you ahead of time on their individual websites and prepare tailored resumes for those positions. At the fair, study the map or take a couple of minutes to look around to locate your targeted employers.

Dressing for Job Fairs

Err on the side of being conservative when you attend a job fair and wear a business suit. Now is not the time to "stand out and be noticed" with unusual clothing. See our Professional Attire for Interviewing handout for more details.

Resumes

A perfect resume is a must! Ideally, you should tailor your resume to specific positions for the most impact.

Waiting in Line

If an employer is talking to a group of students, listen for important information about the position or company while you wait. Pick up any available literature. Speak with the individuals you are in line with regarding what they may know about the company or position. Develop your conversation starters based on the knowledge you obtain and avoid questions to which you know the answers. Remember, the "bigger name" companies have the longest lines, so plan accordingly.

Cut Your Losses

If one of your top-choice employers has a long line of individuals waiting to speak with them, consider speaking to two of your other targets. Depending on your schedule and how long the line(s) at your top-choice target is/are, calculate your options.

What to Say

Be polite at all times. The person you meet in the parking lot, elevator, hallway, or restroom may be a recruiter you will see later. Be professional. Show your personality, but don't be too familiar. Always be assertive, walk up to the person, offer a firm handshake, make direct eye contact, and show enthusiasm on your face and in your voice. These first 10 seconds are crucial. Introduce yourself (you can start by telling your major and your experience related to the available positions); conversation will pick up after that. You should know at least basic facts about the

organization. Focus on your accomplishments and speak clearly. Relate your background and experience to the responsibilities of the position that you are seeking. Good self-presentation skills are critical in making the best first impression. Display confidence, enthusiasm, and the ability to think and speak on your feet – and under pressure. Make use of the Center for Career & Professional Development's interview and networking resources – including practice interviews – to prepare.

60-SECOND COMMERCIAL

Tell the employer what you can do for them – relate your experiences to the employer's needs. Be sure to name your accomplishments. Remember that the conversation is a two-way street; as you market yourself, you're also gathering information.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What are characteristics of successful employees in this position?
- What are the qualifications?
- What are specific job responsibilities?

Be sure to answer an employer's questions. If you don't understand, ask the employer to clarify.

Closing

Don't monopolize the employer's time at a job fair. Plan ahead so you can articulate your skills and related experiences in a concise and professional manner. Get the recruiter's business card, and discuss how and when you should follow up with the recruiter. Jot a note on the back noting specifics from the conversation for follow-up.

Follow-Up

Consider keeping some kind of log or spreadsheet for your notes and any materials you collected, including business cards. Note your initial impressions of each organization. Identify key attributes of each role to reference in your follow-up communication. Prioritize opportunities from most to least favorite. Send well-written, personalized follow-up emails to your top employers by the next day, reminding the representative where and how you met. Explain that you have researched the organization/position and are confident you possess the qualifications they seek.