

JOB FAIR SUCCESS

Make the most out of the Job Fair by preparing for this important networking event ahead of time. Review the following keys to successful Job Fair attendance. The Job Fair is a valuable resource to explore careers and seek employment. Attend this Job Fair to:

- Explore different career fields by visiting with several employers from many types of agencies and organizations -- in one place at one time.
- Talk with recruiters about the variety of career paths available.
- Gain insights from the employers you might obtain an internship or career position with.
- Find out how to apply for open positions.
- Expand your network of employer contacts.
- Exchange information with other job seekers about where they are looking and their success.

Six Steps to Job Fair Success

Depending on your interest in exploring careers versus obtaining an internship/career position, follow these six steps in preparing for a successful Job Fair:

1. Research Organizations that will be at the Job Fair
2. Prepare your Resume and Print out Several Copies to Offer Potential Employers
3. Dress for Success
4. Prepare your Approach & Introduction
5. Ask Questions / Network
6. Follow-up

Step 1 – Research Organizations

View the list of employers attending the Fair and identify the ones that you are most interested in approaching. A quick visit to these organizations' web sites to review their mission statements, operations, and typical job openings will help you decide. Identify your priority or "A-list" employers and plan to visit them first. Never ask, "What does your company do?" at a job fair.

Step 2 – Prepare your Resume

Although a targeted resume works best when applying for employment, a general resume which provides a broad overview of your experiences and skills works well for Job Fairs. You don't need to include an objective statement but can use one if you are targeting your priority employers with a customized resume. Be sure to review the resume several times for spelling and grammatical errors. Plan to bring several copies of your resume to offer employers.

Step 3 – Dress for Success

Dress PROFESSIONALLY! You cannot undervalue a first impression! Consider coming prepared for the job you hope to get. Business casual is recommended, but a suit is also appropriate if you are about to graduate and this attire fits the organizational norm for the employer you are visiting.

Step 4 — Prepare your Approach & Introduction

Name tags are available at the entrance to the Fair.

Employers expect you to walk up and introduce yourself. This may feel uncomfortable at first, but with practice you will get used to doing it and doing it well! Remember, recruiters are at the Fair to meet you so follow these steps:

1. Select three or four companies to approach and visit the organizations you are most interested in last. You'll be well rehearsed and relaxed by the time you reach the companies you're truly interested in reaching. If the booth is busy, move on to another recruiter and come back later. It is impossible to get to every single table in most situations, so it is best to focus your time.

2. Smile, make eye contact, offer your hand, and introduce yourself. A good firm handshake and eye contact shows confidence.
3. Introduce yourself with a brief “commercial” about yourself. This statement should include your professional experiences, any education you may have or are pursuing, and what type of opportunity you are looking for.

EXAMPLE: “Hello, my name is Jon; it is very nice to meet you. I am currently exploring career opportunities. I am working on an Associate’s degree in Human Services-Mental Health and expect to graduate in Spring of 2012. I also have 2 years experience volunteering on the Mental Health Unit at the local hospital. I would like to discuss how I might use these skills within your organization.”

Be personable and keep your interaction brief but effective. Don't forget to ask what your next step should be in the application process.

4. Ask if you can give them a resume! Some employers will suggest that you “just visit our web site to apply” and will not accept a resume. **The value of meeting a company recruiter face-to-face comes later in the follow-up phase.**
5. Thank the recruiter for the information they provided and shake their hand. Ask for a business card in order to follow-up.

Step 5 – Ask Questions / Network

The process of researching organizations will likely make you think of questions you would like to ask recruiters when you meet them at the Fair. These can include:

1. What majors or employment experience would best prepare me to work with your organization?
2. How do I apply for internships/career positions?
3. What skills are you most interested in seeing in a candidate?
4. What kinds of additional skills or experiences would set me apart from other candidates?

Don’t hesitate to strike up a conversation with other job seekers about where they are looking and their success. However, always keep your conversations positive!

1. While it may seem irrational to visit with the competition, other job seekers may know of opportunities in your field or have personal connections with someone who can help you find a job.

Step 6 – Follow-up

Once you make a ***great first impression***, keep the ball rolling with effective follow-up with the potential employer! You can do this through email, phone, or the mail and should be done within a week or so of the event. Your message should include another thank you, state your interest in pursuing a position with their organization (now or in the future), and request an opportunity to meet again to discuss your qualifications in greater detail.

*****Here is where having a recruiter contact really pays off***.** Apply online **AND** send the recruiter an email letting them know that you completed the application while attaching a copy of your resume to the email. This allows the recruiter to potentially pull your application and/or send a message to the appropriate department encouraging them to look at your application. *You have nothing to lose and EVERYTHING to gain!!*

GOOD LUCK, AND WE’LL SEE YOU AT THE FAIR!!