

Quick Reference Guide: Job Fairs

Job fairs are a great way to personalize the job search process, since so much of applications and recruiting are done online. Since most of the companies and jobs will not be the right match, you should spend time preparing so that you can meet with those that are a good fit for you. It's not about the number of companies you speak with, but the quality of the match(es). Below are tips for maximizing your time and effort.

PREPARE:

1. Prepare your resume. Use a MS Word document. If you need help, get it reviewed at The Career Center.
2. Research in advance. Find out which companies are coming and what positions are open on their website.
3. Attend an interviewing workshop or schedule a mock interview to practice your interviewing skills.
4. Dress Professionally. Review your wardrobe to leave time for dry cleaning, alterations, and shoe polishing. See our Quick Reference Guide to Professional Dress for more info.
5. What to Bring: 25 copies of your resume on white paper, a leather or leather-look notepad, and a nice pen. Carry it in a pad folio, briefcase or attaché case. Leave book bags, backpacks, coats and umbrellas in the car or on a coat rack.
6. Prepare an elevator speech. No more than a minute long, you should be able to introduce yourself to a recruiter and provide a summary of your background, achievements, and interests.
7. Be prepared to interview on the spot. Know the type of position you want and your strengths, skills and goals.

AT THE EVENT:

1. Arrive early. Some recruiters have to leave early to attend other events.
2. Use positive body language. Make eye contact. Smile. Offer a firm handshake.
3. Introduce yourself and don't hesitate to make the first move.
4. Ask, "What is the best way to advance my candidacy? What is the next step in the hiring process and the timeline? May I have your business card?"
5. Apply online within 24 hours if the recruiter directs you to do so. Mention the Career Expo in your cover letter.
6. Pick up literature to take home and review.
7. Thank the recruiter for his/her time and information.

DO NOT:

1. Ask, "So what does your company do?" You should already know this.
2. Tell an employer that you are interested if you are not or say you will do something if you will not.
3. Bring family (parents, children), friends, significant others.
4. Walk around in a group of students or with your significant other.
5. Waste time standing in line.
6. Talk on your cell phone.
7. "Shop" giveaways from the employers' tables.

AFTER THE EVENT:

1. Send a written thank you to those companies that most interest you. Emails are acceptable in today's market.
2. Send a resume or thank you within 24 hours.
3. Check out the Quick Reference Guide to Thank You Letters for advice and formatting.