

Job Fair Tips

A job fair is a great opportunity to network with numerous employers at one site on one day to discuss career and internship positions. It allows you to establish connections with recruiters in ways that your resume does not. Note that it is not a simple recruitment event for passively dropping off your resume. It is a networking opportunity that requires preparation and follow-up to result in quality job leads. Here are some measures you can take to make the most of your visit to a job fair.

- ☑ **Research the basic mission, products, and services of the participating employers beforehand.**
- ☑ **Dress appropriately for a professional interview, so as to establish a favorable first impression.**
- ☑ **Bring enough resumes to hand out to all the employers you want to visit.**
- ☑ **Bring a professional portfolio, paper, and pens for keeping organized and for taking notes.**
- ☑ **Use your time wisely by avoiding excessive waiting lines for employers and moving along to shorter ones until the longer ones dissipate.**
- ☑ **Be open-minded and think outside the box in your approach.**
 - Be willing to visit with unfamiliar organizations. Just because you have never heard of a particular organization, does not mean they do not have quality career opportunities available.
 - Meet with employers from industries that are typically considered outside of your major or that are advertising positions that you are not seeking, because they may still have special opportunities for which you qualify. Example: Hospitals hire public relations specialists, human resources generalists, database analysts, and accountants, not just medical staff.
- ☑ **Have an introduction prepared.**
 - Extend a firm handshake and smile, so as to exude confidence and enthusiasm.
 - Provide an elevator speech that quickly highlights your career goals, unique qualifications, work experiences, internships, extracurricular activities, and special skills.

The Elevator Speech

An elevator speech is a piece of communication that can be delivered in the time it takes to ride from the bottom to the top of a building in an elevator, approximately 30 seconds. It answers two basic interview questions: "What can you tell me about yourself?" and "Why should I hire you?"

Example: "Hi, my name is Chris Smith. I am a senior Communication major interested in a career in event planning. As an active member of my college's Service Club, I have been instrumental in helping to coordinate and promote educational events on campus and service projects in the community. This experience has helped me to develop strong skills in communication, teamwork, organization, and problem solving. I am interested in learning details about the marketing internship that is offered through your special events department."

- ☑ **Have a set of questions ready to ask employers, but do not inquire about salary and benefits.**
- ☑ **IMPORTANT: Collect business cards and send follow-up correspondence soon after the event.**
 - Most recruiters will expect you to take the lead in initiating correspondence with them afterward.
 - Sending thank-you letters and your resume to employers represents your enthusiastic interest in their opportunities and keeps the lines of communication open with them.