

## How to Work a Career Fair

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It doesn't matter whether you are looking for a part time or a full time job, going to a career fair can be a challenge. In order to accept those challenges, the best answer is to be prepared. You have to ask yourself, are you ready to speak to someone that could possibly hire you? Do you have a resume that you can pass out? Have you ever researched a company or read a job description to see what job openings a company may have? These are four (4) important issues that most people would be thinking about before they go to a career fair.

Let's take a look at some items that will help you better prepare for a career fair.

### Before going;

1. Make a resume that paints a picture of yourself. List your skills, knowledge and ability, that you have to offer to a potential employer. Once you do make a resume, double check it for grammatical error and even then use your spell checker at least twice. Only put things on a resume that you have do not put false information on it. (If you don't have a resume yet, come by the career center and the staff can help you get started).
2. Dress for Success. On the day of the event, ensure that you have the best appearance possible. This means that not everyone owns a suit; however it does mean that you should have a sharp appearance, neat outer appearance, freshly shaven, and hair properly fixed. No strong perfumes for the ladies nor any strong after shave for the men. Do not go to a career fair wearing jeans that have holes in them and wearing a t-shirt.
3. Research Companies. It isn't often that a bunch of employers will gather for several hours in one area just to meet you and other job seeking candidates. So when a career fair is held on campus it's smart to attend.
4. Develop a 30 second interview. Some people may even call this an elevator interview. This means if you got on an elevator and a recruiter got on as well, you would have about 30 seconds to sell yourself on as to why the recruiter should hire you. For example, tell me about yourself, or what is some of your strong points, or why should I hire you? These are all general type of questions that you should be prepared to answer in an interview.

### At the Actual Career Fair;

1. Be yourself, be honest, and be professional when hunting for a job.
2. Dress appropriately; proper hygiene is in order and definitely no gum nor smoking.

3. Come to the career fair bringing your resume and extra copies to hand out to the recruiters. Carry a folder (of some type) this will make you look more professional.

4. Upon arriving at the career fair there are many ways to work the tables. What I suggest to do prior to attending a career fair is to visit the website that lists all of the companies attending. By knowing what companies are attending, you can do some research prior to coming -- and learn about their needs as well as learn about the company itself that the recruiters are recruiting for.

5. Once you are at the career fair put your best face forward. Be polite, courteous and professional. Say yes sir, or no mam, not yeah, or un huh. The recruiters that you meet are going to be professionals and you want to greet them in a professional manner as well. A firm hand shake is in order and polite conversation is an ice breaker. After name introductions, tell them you are looking for a job and are very much interested in applying for a job that they have. Inform the recruiter that you have a resume and that you would also welcome one his business cards. Tell them what you can do for their company instead of asking them what they can do for you. Once you feel comfortable and have exchanged a resume and got a business card, thank him/her for their time and move on to another table (recruiter). By doing this you will create your own network of people and companies that you can call upon later.

#### **After the Career Fair;**

1. Follow up! During the career fair you probably have picked up a lot of business cards and now want to take some time to review them all.

2. Follow up with any company recruiter that you had spoken with at the career fair. The recruiter (or one of them) could've asked you to follow up with a phone call, or to call them for a further appointment. Whatever you were told, please do the follow up. At the career fair and in speaking with a recruiter, you opened a door for an interview and a possible job offer. Now the plan has been laid and it's up to you to follow up.

3. If I had gone to a career fair and was seeking a job – to be more professional, I would send "THANK YOU" cards to the recruiters that I talked to. Remember to emphasize that you enjoyed speaking with the recruiter at the career fair and that you are very much interested in meeting him/her at a one-on-one meeting. This is a great plan, because most recruiters see a high volume of possible candidates and with a thank you note, hopefully it'll make you more marketable, and also it'll remind the recruiter who you are, and where he/she met you at.

#### **Other Ideas to do:**

1. Ask a friend or a family member to help you do mock interviews before going to a career fair. Believe it or not, if you haven't practiced answering a 30 second elevator

interview you'll stumble and do a bad job during an actual interview. What happens when someone asks you "Tell me about yourself?" Don't talk about hunting and fishing, tell about your work ethics, your work skills and tell recruiters about how you've helped a company or how you might be involved in your community. Keep it simple, but keep it professional. Most Career Center do have career books that shows interview questions and even if you don't live near a college or a library visit your local Barnes & Noble bookstore.

2. In addition to going to a career fair - network, network, network. Network with friends, family, at school, at work, or wherever. Most people know of someone that is looking for a job as well as a lot of people knows of someone that has a job to offer.

3. Career Fair "DO's and DON'T's can be found on most internet websites'. You can use [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com) , or [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) to get more information.

**BEST OF LUCK IN ATTENDING A CAREER FAIR AND  
BEST OF LUCK IN FINDING YOUR NEXT JOB.**