Career Fair Success

Career Fairs offer the chance to speak directly with recruiters offering internship, job, and project-based employment opportunities. Although a job fair can be nerve wracking at first, it can also be exciting. Remember that the people on the other side of the table are humans, too, who once had to attend career fairs. Being prepared, sincere, and enthusiastic will make you stand out above the crowd. Good luck!

➢ Before the Career Fair:
  • Meet with your career advisor to develop a polished resume. Print copies on high quality paper.
  • Research the companies ahead of time so that you know which ones you wish to meet and to sound knowledgeable when speaking with the recruiter.
  • Plan to wear a business casual outfit or business suit. You want to look professional and sharp.
  • Meet with your career advisor to practice interviewing—you may be asked to interview on the spot.
  • Practice selling yourself by rehearsing an introductory statement about yourself that you will use when you meet the company representatives.
  • Have some questions ready to ask the employers.

Questions to Ask Recruiters During the Fair:
  • What kind of entry-level positions does your company have?
  • What might a career path be like for a _______ major at your organization?
  • Are you hiring students for summer or part-time positions?
  • What are some of the newest developments within the ________ department of your organization?
  • Could you describe the training program for_______?
  • Are you accepting applications for the _______ positions?
  • May I leave a resume with you?
  • What goals does your company have for the next few years?
  • How many employees are in my area of interest?
  • Does your company hire on a continual basis or just at certain times of the year?
  • As an entry-level person, what can expect to be doing 2 to 3 years from now?
  • What are the 5 top qualities you seek in a candidate?
  • Are graduate degrees important? If so, in what areas?
  • What is the hiring time frame for filling this position?

Career Fair Mistakes According to Employers
  • Lacking knowledge of what type of position to look for
  • Not dressing professionally
  • Not bringing a resume
  • Lacking enthusiasm or interest in the company or job opportunities
  • Not asking any questions
  • Grabbing giveaway “freebies” without asking or interacting with recruiters
  • Giving a weak handshake
  • Asking about salary, benefits, and perks up front
During the Career Fair:
• Consider the job fair as your first interview with a company. Dress and act professionally. Be enthusiastic. Don’t chew gum and turn off cell phones.
• Present yourself in a confident and friendly manner. Speak up and use good grammar. A firm handshake, smile, and direct eye contact are essential in order to leave a positive impression.
• Be polite at all times. The person you see in the hallway or cafeteria may be the recruiter. Also, be considerate of the jobseeker in front of you by waiting patiently for your turn.
• Sell yourself and spark the employer’s interest in a future interview with you. Introduce yourself, tell what you know about the company, and indicate your interest in a formal interview.
• Carry extra copies of your resume, reference sheet, and transcripts (high quality paper) to distribute.
• Carry your portfolio and be prepared to show it. Be aware that if you leave samples of your work it may not be returned.
• Be prepared that you may be asked to interview on the spot.
• Have a few questions prepared but avoid asking about salaries and benefits at this time.
• Get the recruiter’s business card and discuss when you should follow up. Take notes!
• Be prepared to stand in a line waiting to speak to an employer.

After the Career Fair:
• Send a cover letter or thank you note/e-mail that restates your interest in the company or in a specific position. Specify the skills you possess that match their needs.
• Send any additional information requested.
• Call or e-mail recruiters and check on the status of a specific position.

What you can Expect:
• Request for your resume, transcript, and possibly your reference sheet.
• Employers are likely to talk about benefits (but not salary), information on job openings, and to provide company information.
• They expect follow up in the form of a completed application, a cover letter, or a phone call.
• You can expect to receive an invitation to a formal interview 2–4 weeks after a career fair.