

Preparing for a Job Fair

- Plan exactly what professional attire you will wear. You should look as good as you would for an interview.
- Review standard interview questions and formulate your responses.
- Participate in mock interviews.
- Prepare a 45 second description of who you are and what you want. Your objective is to say one memorable thing to the recruiters as you hand them your resume.
- Obtain the list of companies attending the fair.
- Gather essential items to take to the fair:
 - a letter-sized portfolio with notepad and pen,
 - more than enough copies of your resume,
 - your research notes on companies participating in the fair,
 - a compact professional portfolio of your work samples (optional).

Arriving at the Fair

- Check-in at the registration table to pick up a name tag and a copy of the fair layout. Drop off a copy of your resume.
- Review the information and organize the final list of employers, in order of priority, which you plan to visit.
- Select the employer for your first contact from your priority list (not your first or second choice).
- Develop an interview plan which includes taking a break to assure that you will look and feel your best.
- Watch the traffic flow in the room and if a line seems too long, it may be more efficient to select another employer.
- Check your appearance.
- Organize all of your materials.
- Have your resume ready.
- Review the information about the employer you are approaching.
- Approach the first employer.

Approaching the Employer

- As you approach the table, respect other people's privacy as they complete their contact.
- Conduct yourself professionally at all times, you are on stage even as you stand in line or move about the fair area.
- As you approach the interview table, establish eye contact, present a firm handshake, introduce yourself and explain why you have chosen this employer.
- If the employer invites you to sit down, put your materials in your lap or on the floor beside your chair, not on the table.

Interviewing with the Employer

- Have a three-point agenda: know what you are looking for, what you have to offer and what questions you will ask about the company.
- Listen carefully and take conversational cues from the employer (e.g., when to end a response, when the contact/interview is over).
- Try to generate and maintain interest. Smile, respond to questions with specific and concise examples, keep your voice lively, maintain a pleasant vocal tone, use a slightly forward body posture and use humor appropriately.
- Use transition statements to share information about yourself that the interviewer may not have addressed (e.g., "That's interesting, I had an experience which relates..." or "May I tell you about...").
- Respond truthfully, while always painting a positive picture of yourself (e.g. "I have not yet had an opportunity to... but in a similar situation, I...").
- Ask for company information, application materials and the employer's business card.
- Ask about the hiring process and time lines, and determine actual and potential openings.
- At the end of the contact, offer a firm handshake and express your appreciation, using the employer's name.
- Walk away with confidence, remember that you are still on stage.
- Immediately following the contact, make notes on topics of conversation, contact names and follow-up procedures. Then prepare for your next contact.

Following Up After the Fair

- Within three days, send professional thank you letters addressed to the specific employers (include typed application materials if you have them).
- Within ten days, make telephone calls to determine if the companies have received your application materials, to check on the status of vacant positions, and to express your continued interest.
- Keep accurate records of your contacts with companies, include dates of your letters or telephone calls and copies of all application materials you send.

Final Tip

- Focus on learning as much as you can about what employers are looking for in the people they hire. The primary benefit of participation in the Fair is to collect information and make contacts.