



## **MAKING THE MOST OF A JOB FAIR**

A job fair brings together job seekers and employers with opportunities. The two to three minute exchange with an employer is considered to be an interview. It starts when you enter the fair, so prepare for it as you would for any interview.

- Connect with organizations to collect information, submit resumes or arrange interviews.
- Discuss job search strategies, interview and resume tips, or finding a summer internship with recruiters.
- Develop a job search network – collect referrals to other departments/divisions within an organization.
- Meet with new, less familiar organizations and discover unexpected opportunities.

### **~ WHAT DO I BRING?**

- Multiple copies of your resume copied on good resume paper. Bring at least 20 copies, but get the number of employers at the fair to determine the best amount. Get your resume reviewed by a career counselor ahead of time!
- A portfolio or folder in which to carry your resumes and other materials.
- A notebook or planner to write down upcoming interviews or information sessions or other notes and a good pen.

### **~ WHAT DO I WEAR?**

- Conservative professional attire is the best. You need to be neatly groomed. Your chances for an interview or job could be at risk if you wear anything that can distract an employer from focusing on your qualifications, like heavy perfume or too much jewelry.

#### **Tips for Gentlemen:**

- Wear a clean pressed suit and tie. If you do not own a suit, you should wear clean pressed dress pants and a long sleeved light colored pressed shirt and tie. A sports jacket is preferred.
- Avoid whimsical ties.
- Wear comfortable dress shoes.

#### **Tips for ladies:**

- Wear a clean pressed suit (pants or skirt is fine). If you do not have a suit, wear a nice blouse and skirt or dress pants. Skirts should be no shorter than 2” above the knee.
- Wear comfortable dress shoes (closed toe pumps or flats).

~ PREPARE YOUR TWO-MINUTE COMMERCIAL:

**Introduce yourself, demonstrate that you know something about the organization, the work it does, express why you are interested in that organization or industry, and relate your background to what you know about the employer's needs.**

**“Good morning. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a \_\_\_\_\_ major. What appeals to me about your company is \_\_\_\_\_. I am very interested in \_\_\_\_\_. As you can see in my enclosed resume I can offer you my \_\_\_\_\_ that will make us be a good fit.”**

~ **HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB FAIR?**

### **Before the Fair: Plan Ahead**

- Clarify your goals and what you hope to get out of the fair. Are your expectations consistent with the purpose of the event?
- Find out what companies and organizations are attending.
- Determine the companies or organizations in which you are most interested.
- Research these organizations through their web sites.
- Pack the appropriate amount of resumes (at least two per organization).
- Prepare and practice your two minute commercial to “pitch” to employers
- Prepare questions to ask the representatives.

### **Questions to Ask:**

- What career opportunities are available in your organization?
- What is the employment outlook in the field right now?
- What opportunities do you have for \_\_\_\_\_ majors?
- What type of training is available?
- What types of assignments are given?
- What do you look for in candidates?
- What key skills/experiences are highly desirable?
- Do you have any tips for success in this field?

**NOTE:** Do not ask about salary or benefits.

### **During the Fair:**

- Arrive early. Be there when recruiters are fresh and attentive. Arrive before the majority of other students get there.
- Take time to target organizations that interest you. But, also keep an open mind and consider companies you are not familiar with – there are great opportunities everywhere. If a table is less crowded, you will have the opportunity to converse longer with the representative.
- Be patient and anticipate crowds and lines. Try visiting the tables with fewer crowds first.
- Scan employers' handouts. Instead of just getting in line, approach the table from the side to quietly pick up materials to review. Step back far enough to be able to listen to and observe recruiters speaking to other students. Determine if your two-minute commercial needs to be adjusted.
- Take initiative and introduce yourself with a smile and handshake.
- Give your resume to the representative. Launch into your two-minute commercial. Ask questions from the list you prepared.

- Ask about the application procedure.
- Get a business card or a contact name from every person you meet. Write interesting facts, notes or additional contact names on the back of the card. Use this information to follow up after the fair.
- Many company tables have “freebies”, such as pens, candy, and toys. Be courteous and cautious when taking these items. If you take any candy or gum, save it for after the fair.
- Don’t play with the stress balls or other toys during the fair. Avoid taking every free item you see. It is noticeable by recruiters and staff when a student seems to be attending the fair just for free items.
- If you are an international student don’t say that you need a job to stay in the US. Address the employer professionally and connect your skills to the needs of the company.

#### After the Fair: Continue the Search

- Write a thank you note to each representative you spoke with. Include another resume and, if requested, any additional information.
- Continue to research the companies or organizations that you met at the fair.
- Complete and return the student survey. Your comments are useful in planning future fairs.
- Use a variety of job search strategies in addition to job fairs to round out your job search.
- Work with your Career Services Office and/or Career Connection. Follow the procedures established by them to participate in on-campus interviewing.