

## HOW TO SUCCEED AT A JOB FAIR

Job fairs can be a valuable component of your job search - but only if you know how to properly succeed at one...

### Before the Fair

1. Research the employers with whom you want to interview. This can be done by conducting an internet search, reading recruitment brochures, browsing annual reports and promotional materials, and calling the company.
2. Carefully prepare your resume (make sure you stop by the Career Center to get it checked over!). Make sure you have plenty of copies on professional resume paper.
3. Know yourself. Be familiar with your strengths, weaknesses, values, interests, and career goals. This will enable you to be well-spoken when the recruiter asks you questions.
4. Prepare a list of suitable questions to ask the recruiter. Asking questions shows the recruiter that you are seriously interested in the position and genuinely want to know more about it and the organization.
5. Utilize the services of the Career Center. The Career Center offers many services that can be highly beneficial in your job fair preparation, such as interviewing tips, resume checks, mock interviews, and a well-stocked resource library.
6. Make sure you bring the following to the fair:
  - Multiple copies of your resume
  - Copies of your unofficial transcript and references, in case employers ask for them
  - Portfolio with notepad and pen
  - Money for food, telephone calls, etc.
  - Emergency grooming kit containing items such as a comb or brush, nail polish for runners in nylons, breath mints (no gum), band-aids, make-up, etc.

### During the Fair

1. Dress Professionally
  - Always wear conservative style clothing. For men, that means a suit and tie, ironed white shirt, polished leather shoes, and matching dress socks. For women, a business skirt and jacket or pant-suit and polished leather shoes. Only wear a minimal amount of accessories.
  - Make sure your shoes are broken-in and comfortable because you will be on your feet for a large part of the day.
  - Use proper grooming and hygiene. Make sure your nails are trimmed, your breath is fresh, and your hair is in place. Use perfume and cologne sparingly, if at all.
  - For women—if you wear a skirt, make sure it does not come up to mid-thigh when you are sitting down. Sit in your outfit at home, or before you purchase it, to be sure that it is professional looking while sitting down, as well as while standing.
2. Act Professionally
  - You never know where a recruiter may be lurking, so be sure to act professionally in the parking lot, in bathrooms, and at local restaurants if you go on a lunch break. Additionally, many recruiters may look like students, while some students will look like recruiters, so you should always be careful of what you say and/or do while at the fair.
  - Turn off your cell phone, or at least put it on vibrate.

- Be patient. There will probably be lines for the recruiters at the fair. Respect the privacy of the candidates before you by not hovering near the table while you wait for your turn.
  - Organize a list of employers with whom you wish to speak. This will enable you to be relaxed at the fair, instead of frantically pacing from table to table deciding who to speak with next.
  - Start with a few employers who may not be your top choice, in order to gain your confidence. Then, when you feel more comfortable, approach your top choices. However, do not leave your top choices to the end because you want to be fresh when speaking with them.
3. Market Yourself to Employers - You may only have a few minutes to speak with each one, so use your time well. Treat the conversation as though it were an interview.
- Approach recruiters with confidence and purpose.
  - Offer a firm handshake, introduce yourself, and tell the interviewer exactly what you are looking for. For example: "Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am pursuing a degree in \_\_\_\_\_ at Dickinson College, and I am interested in obtaining a position in \_\_\_\_\_ with your company."
  - Respond truthfully to questions, but always convey a positive image of yourself.
  - Be active, enthusiastic, and assertive, but not aggressive.
  - Do not ramble.
  - Maintain eye contact.
  - When stating skills that you possess, be sure to back them up by providing examples.
  - Ask questions.
  - Maintain confidence!
  - At the end of the conversation, be sure to obtain a business card, and ask what the steps are in the application and selection process. Make sure they have a copy of your resume.
  - Always thank the recruiter for his or her time.
  - After the conversation, you may want to sit somewhere and write down a few notes about what you discussed with the recruiter. You will speak with many recruiters throughout the day and you want to remember what you spoke about with each of them.

### **After the Fair**

1. Send a thank-you letter within three days to the employers with whom you met. Make sure to mention specific things that were discussed when you met with him or her, and ask for further consideration.
2. Complete any applications that were given to you and return them promptly.
3. Be persistent. Call to make sure your resume was reviewed, and request another interview. However, do not be overly aggressive.
4. Stay organized. Keep track of all applications you have sent, phone calls you have made, and resumes you have handed out.