

Career Fair Strategies | *What to know before you go*

At a career fair, you have an opportunity to meet and make an impression on many prospective employers in a short period of time. A career fair provides excellent opportunities to network with employers in your industry of choice, and taking the time to prepare properly greatly enhances your chances of landing an interview or job offer. Think of a career fair as a series of mini interviews.

Before You Go

- Scan the list of all employers attending the job fair and make an “A” list (those employers that interest you the most) and a “B” list (those employers that would be your second choice). You and the employer will have a limited amount of time, so it is best to prioritize the companies so you can get to visit the ones that you are really excited about.
- Once you have your “A” list, visit the company website for each organization on your “A” list. If you have extra time, do the same for your “B” list.
- Scan the company website to learn about the company culture, products manufactured, services offered, company mission and values and the future of the company. In short, learn all you can. Make yourself stand out by letting the employer know that you visited the company website. Feel free to discuss relevant information that you learned.
- Be sure to visit the following tabs or sections on the company website: Careers, About Us, Partners, Products, and Services.
- In the Careers section, review the open positions in your location and read the job description. Take notes about positions that may be of interest to you.

Details and Logistics:

- Take two copies of your resume for every company you are interested in visiting. Do not be offended if the employer does not take your resume. The employer may request that you fill out an application on line or complete an application at the career fair.
- Arrive early and become familiar with the location of employers at the career fair. Then you can strategize and know where to go based on your priorities. Career fairs can be very crowded!
- Remember to dress as if you have an interview. Professional attire is best.
- Take a note pad, pen, and a folder for your resumes.

Mini-Interview Preparation

- After you have visited the websites of the companies on your “A” list, prepare a short list of questions to ask the employer. Possible questions might include:
 - *I was looking at your company website and I read about research your company is doing.*
 - *Can you tell me more about this?*
 - *What skills do you value most in employees?*
 - *Can you describe your ideal candidate?*
- Be prepared to discuss your career objectives. Take some time to think about your interests and your strengths. Be able to describe these to the employer.
- Prepare and practice a 20-30 second introduction. Practice will help you to feel more comfortable.
- If this is your first career fair or you want more information about what takes place at a career fair, visit www.Youtube.com and type “career fairs” in the search engine. This is a great way to learn about career fairs if you are a visual learner.
- One of the toughest interview questions for job seekers is *“Tell me about yourself.”* Practice and rehearse how you will respond to this question. Remember to keep your answer brief and professional, not personal.