



# Job Fair Tips

## **Come Prepared.**

Bring enough resumes for all the employers. Bring a pen and notepad so you can write down important details of each interaction. Take note of next steps and a personal detail to remind them of your conversation in your Thank You Note or future interactions.

## **Dress for the job you want.**

Pretend that the career fair is your first interview for your dream job. And just as it does at a job interview, how you dress at the career fair speaks volumes about you.

First impressions are very important, and one's attire should be appropriate, conservative and simple. Men should consider wearing a suit fit for a day at work, and slacks, a skirt, or dress and jacket for women. Accessories, fragrances and makeup should be kept to a minimum.

Once you've prepared your outfit, you should ask yourself: Do I look professional, confident, approachable? Make sure you run your outfit, handshake and smile by a trusted friend.

## **Do your research.**

You'll need to know a bit about the companies attending a career fair if you want to be perceived as interested. Spend time researching the companies prior to meeting with them. Doing so will allow you to create a prioritized list of companies that have positions available that best match your skills, qualifications, and area of interest.

## **Don't rush in. Rather, create a game plan.**

Plan a strategy for whom you'll speak to first. Before you walk into the fair, take a minute to observe the layout and assess which booths you should target first. Create a strategy for the representatives you want to meet and stick with your plan. Don't stand in line, instead, use your time to meet with less-crowded tables. If your schedule allows, you may find it easiest to start with the employers in which you're less interested. This will allow you to hone your approach and to be more confident when you approach the employers you're especially excited about.

## **Create a brief elevator pitch.**

To make a good impression, have a one-minute pitch that introduces yourself. Include your name and your career aspirations and how that ties in to working for this company. Your elevator pitch should make you stand out from the crowd as someone employers would love to hire.

## **Make sure your body language conveys your interest.**

Whether you're naturally shy or outgoing, your body language can show how you feel without words. To look confident and assertive, eye contact, a firm handshake, and a smile are key. You will want to shake the recruiter's hand before and after you speak with them. Make sure to maintain direct eye contact the entire time you are speaking. Don't let your mind or your eyes wander as it may draw the recruiter's attention away from your message. As an inside tip, use a bit of antiperspirant on your hands for a good, dry handshake.



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## **Mix and mingle with as many recruiters as you can.**

Career fairs are a great place to network and build strong relationships within your future industry. Talk with as many people as you can at a career fair. Even if a company does not offer what you are looking for, you never know who that company representative may know. You may be pleasantly surprised as to who knows whom and where someone may be able to refer you.

Remember to connect with the recruiters you meet on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a great way to maintain these relationships, even if you aren't pursuing a job right away.

## **Ask thoughtful questions.**

The right questions will show you've put thought into the company and are interested in learning more. Ask about a typical day for the position you are interested in. It's also good idea to ask about the company's culture and work environment to determine if the position would be a good fit for your personality. Another great open-ended question that demonstrates your interest is to ask what initial training is like.

But remember, don't ask questions that you could answer with a quick look at the organization's website. For instance, don't ask, "What does your company do?"

## **Ask for business cards.**

Collecting a business card from a representative that you speak with can be a really important tool in helping you make progress in your search. You have the opportunity to follow up with questions and, more importantly, you can send a 'thank you' to those you spoke with.

## **Follow up with a 'thank you' note.**

Just as you would after a job interview, you'll make the best impression by following up after the fair. Recruiters are meeting *many* potential candidates. Stand out from the others by sending a follow-up note after the fair. This is a great place to say thank you and reiterate your interest in the position and prove you are an ideal candidate. If you can, share something specific about your conversation that will trigger their memory.

*Ultimately, success at a career fair is all about the impression you make. Employers are there to find high-potential candidates for their organization. Leave them with the impression that you are that candidate.*