

How to Make the Most of the Job and Internship Fair

A job fair is a great place to gather information about potential employers and make contacts that can lead to your first job. Here we offer some advice on how to make the most of your time. Keep in mind that many employers will also be coming to campus to conduct interviews or hold information session. This is your first opportunity to make a great impression with them, so be prepared! They may be using the fair as a way to screen applicants.

5 Things to Take to the Fair

1) Copies of your résumé

- (25 to 40 depending on the size of the event). Be sure it represents your knowledge, skills, and abilities effectively.
- If you are looking at several career options, you may want to have two or more targeted résumés with different career objectives!

2) A smile, a strong handshake, and a positive attitude.

- First impressions are important. Approach an employer, make eye contact, smile, and offer your hand when you introduce yourself.

3) Prepare and practice a 30-second introduction to the employer

- Be prepared to share basic information about yourself and your career interests like this:

"Hello, I'm Carrie Jones. I'm a senior here at Binghamton and I'm majoring in English. I'm very interested in a marketing career. As you can see on my résumé, I just completed an internship in the Marketing Division of the ABC Company in NYC. I've also taken some courses in business marketing. I'm very interested in talking with you about marketing opportunities with your organization."

4) Information about the organizations attending.

- **Use eRecruiting** or follow the link from CDC's website under 'CDC Sponsored Events' to identify the employers who will be attending and what majors they seek.
- Gather information as you would for a job interview. To maximize the brief time you have with each employer, know how your skills and interests match their needs.
- Don't just concentrate on the "big names." There are often great opportunities with organizations with which you are not familiar. Know which employers are attending the fair.
- Research employer websites. Make "A" and "B" lists of employers to meet.

5) Energy! Job Fairs require you to move from table to table for an hour or so. Each time you meet someone, be at your best, as refreshed as possible!

6) A well-dressed presentable you.

- Business casual at a minimum. Remember you are making a first impression
- No jeans, no caps, no shorts, and no midriffs; Keep jewelry to a minimum
- Be well-groomed
- Avoid perfumes and overpowering after shaves
- Carry a pack of breath mints. Use them.

5 Things Not to Do at the Fair

1. **Don't cruise the booths with a group of friends.** Interact with recruiters on your own. Make your own positive impression!
2. **Don't carry your backpack, large purse, or other paraphernalia with you.** Carry your résumé in a professional-looking portfolio or small briefcase works well. It will keep your résumé neat and handy, and gives you a place to file business cards of recruiters that you meet.
3. **Don't ask "So what do you guys do?"** or "How much does this position pay?" Tell the employer what you know about them to show that you have done your research.
4. **Don't come dressed for practice** (or any other extremely casual activity). A job fair is a professional activity—perhaps your first contact with a future employer.
5. **Don't "wing it".** Do your homework! Research the employers just as you would for an interview. You'll be able to focus on why you want to work for the organization and what you can do for them.
6. **Don't come during the last half hour of the event.** Many employers travel a long distance to attend the fair and may need to leave early. If you come late, you may miss organizations you wanted to contact!

5 Things to Take Home From the Fair

1. **Business cards** from the recruiters you have met. Use the cards to write follow-up notes to those organizations in which you are most interested.
2. **Notes about contacts you made.** Take paper and pen with you to write down important details about particular organizations, including names of people who may not have had business cards. Take a few minutes after you leave each table to jot down these notes!
3. **Information about organizations you have contacted.** Most recruiters will have information for you to pick up, including company brochures, computer diskettes or CD's, position descriptions, and other data. You won't have time to deal with these at the fair!
4. **A better sense of your career options.** If you have used the event correctly, you will have made contact with several organizations that hire people with your skills and interests. In thinking about their needs and your background, evaluate whether each company might be a match for you.
5. **Self-confidence in interacting with employer representatives.** A career fair gives you the opportunity to practice your interview skills in a less formidable environment than a formal interview. Use this experience to practice talking about what you have done, what you know, and what your interests are.

After the Job & Internship Fair check the eRecruiting calendar/employers on a regular basis to see if employers of interest have posted positions or will be conducting on-campus interviews.