

Prepare for Job Fair Success!

Preparation is the key to making a successful presentation at any job or career fair. At a minimum, you should do the following:

Prior to the Job/Career Fair (PREPARE!)

1. Think about your strong points, your goals, the company and where you want to go within the company. Prepare a "one minute commercial".
2. Prepare your résumé! If you need assistance in preparing a résumé, attend the résumé workshops or use the examples found in your Career Services office. Once you've started, meet with a counselor to "fine tune" your résumé.
3. Understand how your skills (or the ones that you want to develop) relate to the employment opportunities available at your chosen organizations.
4. Thoroughly research your "core" companies and gain background information upon which you can base your conversations with the company representatives. Check the career services office on your campus and company web pages for the information that you'll need to prepare for the fair.
5. Prepare your own job fair kit complete with résumés (enough for all employers that you want to talk with). Other items that support your interests and abilities -- such as references, written work or a portfolio -- can also be helpful.
6. Be prepared to discuss where you want to work geographically (New York – Boston -- anywhere), what you like doing, what you're looking for in a first job, what your most relevant skills are.
7. Stop by the career services office to watch the "Connecting with Employers: Making the Most of a Job Fair" video and talk about your preparation for the event with the counselor.

Day of the Job/Career Fair

1. Dress as you would for a job interview. You want to present the best image possible -- jeans, sweatshirts, and backpacks won't cut it. Avoid excessive jewelry and perfume. You will only have a few minutes to make an impression as a job candidate. Positive first impressions are critical.
2. Arrive early and map out your strategy. Who will you talk with first? Lines will be long for some companies. Plan accordingly and don't waste valuable time by standing in line.
3. Keep an open mind and don't reduce your opportunities due to lack of information or effort. You may want to tour the arena and make contact with all the organizations to learn more about them and what they have to offer, but visit your "core" companies first.

4. Introduce yourself to the representative in a positive and confident manner; offer a firm handshake. Include your name, your school, major, and the year you are graduating.
5. Tell the recruiter what your interests are. For example: discussing a particular career or job with that organization learning more about the organization and available opportunities learning more about what someone does in a particular career discussing internship or summer job opportunities.
6. Give the representative a resume and be ready to discuss your background, qualifications and career goals. Ask what you should do to apply for a position with them.
7. Think of questions that you have regarding your area(s) of interest. Take notes on what you hear. Some questions might be:

What are common career paths with your organization?
What is the training program for new hires?
What do you look for in a candidate?
8. Don't be turned off by employers referring you to their online application process. Be prepared with additional questions about their application process and about their company. Companies send recruiters to job fairs to meet candidates and make notes on initial impressions even if they have an online application. So use this time to ask questions, network, and introduce your skills. Don't just walk away frustrated!
9. Make sure you obtain the representative's name, title, address, and phone number so you can follow up with them. Collect literature and business cards whenever possible and ask the representative when you can expect to hear back from them.
10. Be sure to take notes after each table. Take a few moments to write down your thoughts about the company, the recruiter, your chances, follow-up strategies, to-do list, etc.

After the Job/Career Fair

After the career fair, you should make it a point to take some action to contact the companies you spoke with – apply online and refer to the recruiter you met at the fair and/or follow up with a letter expressing your interest in the company and in what they have to offer. You may want to include an updated résumé or provide better answers to specific questions asked during the fair.

Thank you/follow up letters should be received by the employer within a week after a fair.

Job Fair Tips Courtesy of:
WestPACS
Next Job Fair: Wednesday, April 1, 2009
www.westpacs.org