

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL JOB FAIR

Job fairs are a unique opportunity to actually meet employers you might not have access to any other way. They are an opportunity to learn more about a company, to talk one-on-one with a company representative, and to make that ever-critical first impression. In this day of online applications and key word searches, a face-to-face opportunity is vitally important. Speaking with other job seekers can also be beneficial. The following are general tips for getting the most out of a job fair.



1. Do your research ahead of time.

Before the event, research which companies will be in attendance and what job openings they have available. Visit their websites. Write down questions you may have for different employers. If you spend a little time getting background information in advance, you can ask very focused and specific questions. This impresses representatives because it shows a genuine interest and effort on your part.

2. Come prepared.

It's been said that luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity. Make the most of this one by coming prepared to stand out from the crowd. Along with your background research, bring with you:

- Several copies of your resume
- A pad of paper to take notes, plus extra pens or pencils
- Personal care items (breath mints, tissues, etc.)

3. Dress professionally.

Dress as if you were headed to an interview. Employers will make decisions based on first impressions. These can make a lasting impact, and can open doors or close them. (TIP: wear comfortable but professional shoes.)

4. Arrive early.

In some cases, you can pre-register for the event. Do so. Lines can be long at the larger fairs, so if you arrive early and have your targeted companies in mind, you can meet them right away. In addition, some employers are impressed with the eagerness of the first arrivals—it's all part of making that lasting impression.

5. Map out your time.

You've done your research. You should have "A" companies that you know you want to meet and "B" companies about which you want to know more. Locate each company on the event map, or take a walk around the event first to locate your top companies. Budget your time as well—don't spend it all with the first employer.

6. Don't be shy.

As you approach an employer's table, be friendly, be confident, smile and be prepared to say something about yourself.

7. Listen, ask questions and take notes.

Recruiters spend all day hearing people talk about their professional background. Try to make it a conversation. Demonstrate your research by asking the recruiter questions. Show off your listening skills as part of the conversation. Take notes so you can follow up later or include the information in your next cover letter.

8. Follow up after the event.

When you make a connection, be sure to get a name and contact information or a business card. Within 48 hours, be sure to send a thank you card or email, sharing again your qualifications for any interesting opportunities. Showcasing your ability to follow-up on leads will help set you apart from others.

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See other side for more tips



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JOB FAIR DO'S & DON'TS



Job fairs are a time to meet employers face-to-face, to ask questions and for you to understand what your dream job might be really like. It is important to understand that first impressions are where that employer can make critical decisions about you. It is in that first two to ten minutes that they decide whether you are worth their time to take the next step

DO pre-register for the event, and **DO** attempt to get the list of attending companies before the career fair.

DO dress professionally—conservative is always the safe choice.

DO bring enough copies of your resume to the career fair. And **DO** bring different versions of your resume if you are searching for different types of jobs.

DO have a specific strategy for maximizing your time at the event.

DON'T eliminate companies because they are recruiting for positions outside your field; take the time to network with the recruiter and get the name of a hiring manager for your particular career field.

DO attempt to research basic information about each company you hope to interview with at the job fair. A common career fair question from recruiters is, "Why do you want to work for our company?"

DON'T ever just walk up to a booth and interrupt a conversation; wait your turn and be polite, and maintain social distancing.

DON'T just drop your resume on the recruiter's table and walk off.

DO prepare a one-minute "commercial" that focuses on the unique benefits you can offer the employer - your unique selling proposition. And be prepared to answer a few common interview questions.

DO have a few questions prepared for each recruiter, but **DON'T** ask questions that any good job-seeker should already know, such as "What does your company do?"

DO say the recruiter's name several times during your conversation. Get contact information from each recruiter.

DO remember all the keys to successful interviewing, including a warm smile, eye contact, and a strong voice.

DON'T forget to eliminate such bad habits as playing with your hair, chewing gum, fidgeting, rocking from side-to-side, acting distracted, rubbing your eyes, etc.

DO take advantage of the time you have to build rapport with each recruiter, but **DON'T** monopolize their time.

DON'T ever say anything negative to the recruiter about your previous jobs, companies, or supervisors.

DO be sure to ask about the hiring process of each company, but **DON'T** ask questions about salaries, vacation time, and other benefits.

DO take the initiative and ask about the next step in the process. And **DO** be prepared to follow-up all job leads.

DO be sure to follow-up with each recruiter. Some experts say to call and leave a message on their voicemail right after the job fair, but at a minimum you should send each recruiter a thank you letter within 48 hours.

See other side for more tips.



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