

Success at the Job Fair

1. **Take the Event Seriously.** It is an interview. You are making that all-important first impression. Only a small percentage of hundreds of interviews will stand out at the end of the event. Make sure you're one of them! Dress well, practice your best handshake, award-winning smile and eye contact!

2. **Prepare a Job Fair Portfolio.** Preparation will set you apart from the crowd at a job fair.

The **resume** should be short, clear and concise so the employer can easily read it in a short time. Have several copies with you and make sure they do not become wrinkled. If possible, don't just drop off your resume on the table. Try to get it in the recruiter's hands and at least say a few words. Come back to tables where the employer was too busy.

Letters of recommendation –make copies of your top three letters multiplied by the number of employers you plan to meet with. These letters will force them to file your resume differently from the rest of the stack. **Portfolio**- Your 9x12 portfolio can be used to store your resume and letters of recommendation, have note paper for any notes you may have after talking to employers.

3. **Communicate** your skills in a clear, concise manner. Take time to self-assess and focus on your skills, values, interests. Interests are areas that energize you. Create a capsule biography that reflects your unique skills as they relate to your career field. This is a one minute "commercial" that introduces yourself, demonstrates that you know something about the organization and work it does, express why you are interested in the organization or field and briefly relate your background to what you know about the employer's needs. Practice your commercial and in addition, prepare 3-4 questions you can ask the recruiter.

4. **Be an active participant.** Not just a browser. If all you do is stroll around, take company literature and load up on freebies, you really haven't accomplished anything worthwhile. It is important to chat with the recruiters and ask meaningful questions. (for example, don't ask about salary or what the company does if it is in the published information) Here are some sample questions for representatives at the fair.

1. What kind of entry level positions exist within your organization?
2. What goals does your company have for the future?
3. How many employees does the company have?
4. How many employees are in my area of interest (which is...?)

5. Does your company hire on a continual basis or just at certain times of the year?
6. How long does the hiring process take?
7. What does your organization consider the most important qualities in an employee?
8. What type of education is important?
9. What courses do you suggest in order to be successful candidate?
10. What personality traits are important for success in your company/industry?
11. As an entry level employee, what can I expect to be doing 2, 5, 10 years from now?
12. How long have you been with the company?
13. What made you choose this company or field of work?
14. What things has your organization accomplished of which you are especially proud?
15. For how many years does the entry-level employee typically stay with the company?
16. What percent of applicants are eventually hired?
17. What is the retention rate for this company?
18. Do you expect your employees to relocate?

Of course, you would not, need, or want to ask all of these questions and these are only some samples for your review.

5. **Time** is of the essence. So arrive early in the day when recruiters are the most refreshed and may not be as busy as they will be later in the day. Utilize the opportunity to collect business cards from everyone you meet. Make brief notes on the back regarding important points you want to remember about the employers. This will be helpful in your thank you letters! Most employers will expect you to express your interest by following up with them.

Good luck on your job search!