

How to Work a Career Fair

PREPARE IN ADVANCE:

- Have an updated resume that highlights your skills, experiences, accomplishments; use easy-to-read format with no typos
- Come to a drop-in to have a Career Counselor review your resume
- Research companies before the career fair! Never ask, “What does your company do?”
- Practice interview skills using InterviewStream or ACPC mock interviews
- Know your schedule in case you are asked for an interview

DAY OF THE FAIR:

- Be knowledgeable about the company before introducing yourself. Review company info from company website in advance
- Show confidence with a firm handshake, smile, and eye contact
- Be honest about your experience (focus on positive points)
- Dress the part. Business attire is recommended for all (especially full-time seekers and business students)

PREPARE YOUR 30-SECOND ELEVATOR SPEECH

INCLUDE:

- Your name, graduation date (career status)
- Major/field of interest
- Type of position you are seeking (internship, co-op, full-time)
- Why you are interested in the company

EXAMPLE:

“Hi, I’m Rachel Reed, Management Information Systems major, graduating in May 2016. [Pause to allow recruiter to give her/his name] I have experience in systems analysis and networking, but am specifically interested in database design and web development. I recently learned that you create interactive 3D data visualization screens at (company name). Could you tell me more about full-time positions at (company name) within web development?”

INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS:

- Tailor your introduction to each employer you approach based on research and knowledge of each company.
- Practice your introduction. Assess your nonverbal communications—eye contact, facial expressions, body language, and posture. Practice with a mirror, a friend, online using InterviewStream and/or with a Career Counselor.

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DO:

- Get employer location map and familiarize yourself with the layout
- Prioritize your employers of interest and approach your top companies before the end of fair – they get tired too
- Show confidence with a good, firm handshake
- Bring different versions of your resume only IF you have multiple interests; you do not need a tailored resume for every employer
- Visit employers that align with your career goals
- Ask for business cards

DON'T:

- Say “I don't know” or “I'll take anything” when employers ask about your interests
- Visit the company tables with friends or in a group
- Forget to take notes after your conversation – you won't remember everyone you talked with
- Be offended if a company asks you to apply online – many employers use this as their official application method
- Sell yourself short – this is the time to mention your accomplishments

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS:

What qualities do you look for in candidates at [company]?

Listen for those that you have, then give recruiter an example of how you have used it

In researching [company], I saw that you [insert trend here]; can you tell me more about that?

What type of training do you offer?

Only ask if not stated on company website

If hired, what type of projects might I work on initially?

Only ask if not stated on company website

TYPICAL QUESTIONS FROM EMPLOYERS:

Tell me about yourself.

What do you know about our company?

Why do you want to work for us?

What are your most valuable experiences?

What questions do you have for me?

FOLLOW-UP:

Always end with: “What are the next steps in the hiring process?” or “Is there an estimated decision date?” and “May I call or e-mail you?”

Decide which companies you are interested in and follow-up where your conversation left off. If asked to complete an online application, do so and send a thank you note to the employer letting them know you completed the application.