

JOB FAIRS: HOW TO MAKE THEM WORK FOR YOU

Learn Who's Attending Ahead of time:

- Many fairs are geared specifically to certain fields, is it your field of interest?
- Find out the companies attending, check websites /newspaper listings.
- Narrow the list of companies you are most interested in.
- Gather information about the employers located on their websites, at Career Center, public library, resume etc.

Be Prepared:

- Prepare a succinct summary of your qualifications.
- Rehearse your qualifications, demonstrate your ability to articulate your skills and your preparedness.
- Prepare questions to ask employer representatives, minimum of 2.
- Bring extra, updated resumes without objectives.
- Bring paper, pen /pencil, paper clips, etc. with you.
- Carry items in a folio/file with extra resumes, note paper, allowing room for materials collected: business cards, brochures, etc.

Dress Appropriately:

- Dress professionally, yet more conservatively, in clean pressed clothes.
- Regardless how the representative is dressed, you want him/her to know you are a professional job seeker.
- Avoid extra coats/jackets and briefcase, eliminates extra bulk.

Expect to be Evaluated:

- Remember, 1st impressions count, even if you are only gathering information.
- Your initial contact may be the company's 1st screening.

Strategize:

- Check in at the registration table, obtaining a list of attendee and their location.
- Acclimate yourself to the layout of the fair.
- Know the amount of time you'll spend at the fair and pace yourself.
- If you're planning several hours, you may wish to bring a snack/energy bar, to maintain your energy.
- Avoid eating, drinking or carrying food when visiting employers' tables.
- Practice conversing with other companies before targeting your favorite ones.
- After leaving an employer, take time to jot down notes if they interest

you.

- Use the fair as your own screening device. It's your opportunity to make contact with dozens of employers , learn more about them and decide if follow-up is worthwhile.

At the Employer's Table:

- Wait patiently, avoid approaching the table if someone else is conversing, respecting their privacy.
- When approaching the representative, establish eye contact, smile, shake hands firmly and introduce yourself.
- Tell them why you're interested in their organization, hand them your resume.
- Be prepared to state your qualifications in 30 seconds or less.
- Look for job postings, current or anticipated. Ask, if you don't see any available.
- Collect business card, application and information if you're interested.

After the Fair:

- Write further notes while information is still fresh in your mind: key names and important facts concerning the companies you 're interested in following up.
- Send thank you notes. They demonstrate professionalism and your continued interest, especially if you were given a brief interview.
- Copy applications prior to filling them out, in case you make a mistake, or use an erasable pen.
- Fill out applications , prioritizing them and turning them in on a timely manner—one to two weeks.
- Include a note with the application stating the representative you talked to and which fair you attended.

Websites with additional information:

http://www.quintcareers.com/job_career_fairs.html

<http://www.collegegrad.com/book/11-0.shtml>