

## Tips for Preparing for Job Fairs

### Things to DO before a Job Fair

- ✓ **Research companies before attending.** Find out who will be attending and review their website to understand what each organization does.
- ✓ **Develop a plan for the fair.** Make a list of the organizations you most want to visit at the fair so that you can make the best use of your time.
- ✓ **Make sure your resume is up to date and error-free.** Have it critiqued by the Career Center or your Internship Coordinator.
- ✓ **Check your wardrobe.** Dress professionally to make a positive impression. Dress as if you were going to a job interview.

### Things NOT TO DO at a Job Fair

- ✓ **Visit each booth with a group of your friends.** Your interests may be different from those of your friends, and it is good to make your own impression on the employers.
- ✓ **Take the free stuff** (without speaking to the recruiter).
- ✓ **Come to the fair during the last half hour.** If possible, get there earlier as some employers may leave early.
- ✓ **Limit yourself from speaking with recruiters from only companies whose names you recognize.** Great opportunities can be found at organizations that you may not be familiar with.
- ✓ **Ask about salary.**

### Things to BRING to a Job Fair

- ✓ **Multiple copies of your resume printed on good quality resume paper.** Depending on the size of the fair and the number of employers you plan to meet, you may want to bring 25-30 copies (Note: you can get resume paper from the Copy Center)
- ✓ **Your 30-Second "Elevator Speech".** You'll want to have something to say when you meet recruiters. Think of it as your introduction or "sales pitch".
- ✓ **Your knowledge of the companies that are attending.** You'll make a great impression if you show that you've done your homework! Ask questions based on what you know about the company.
- ✓ **A firm handshake, energy, and enthusiasm.** First impressions are important.

### Things to TAKE AWAY from a Job Fair

- ✓ **Always try to get business cards from recruiters.** If none are available, make sure to write down the person's name and title and contact information. You can use this information to send a thank you note or email to the employers you met, and to connect on LinkedIn.
- ✓ **Notes about the conversation you have with each person.** After leaving the table, take a minute to jot down a few notes about the organization, opportunities, etc. This is particularly helpful if you are speaking to a number of employers.
- ✓ **Information about the organizations.** Most employers will bring brochures or some other form of company material.
- ✓ **Increased confidence.** Job fairs are great opportunities to get used to speaking with employers without the pressure of a job interview

## The Introduction

When you attend a job fair, it is important to prepare something to say when you approach employers. **Hint:** this outline for an introduction is also useful for making contact with potential employers by phone and email as well.

### Elements to Include:

- Name
- Class year (senior, junior, etc.)
- Major
- Opportunities that you are seeking
- Relevant experience (work, internships)
- Highlights of skills and strengths
- Knowledge of the company

*Smile, make eye contact, use a firm handshake.*

### An example:

Hi, my name is...I am a junior majoring in business with a focus in marketing. I'm interested in finding a full-time internship for the fall semester that allows me to build on my previous internship experience at...where I helped develop promotional materials used at tradeshow. Because your organization develops similar marketing materials, I believe I could make a contribution as an intern.

### Ask potential employers the right questions to ensure a good fit

Identifying the right company to work for means investigating the potential employer thoroughly, and that means asking solid questions.

The first investigative approach is to try to talk to someone in the company (unrelated to the interviewing process) and find out as much as you can about management philosophy, technology adoption and viewpoint, and the work culture. It's worth calling a few networking contacts and sending some e-mail messages to friends and former colleagues to ask if they know the company and anyone working there.

The second approach hinges on getting the hiring manager to invite you in for an interview or pre-interview. This is a valuable opportunity to delve into pertinent issues and get feedback and insight directly from the most relevant manager.

The key to making these investigative approaches work is developing a solid list of questions to ask before you sit down to talk to anyone at the prospective company. Here are some suggestions on what job hunters should ask of company officials, either during an interview or a pre-interview.

### Sample Questions for Employers

- How would you describe the organizational culture?
- How many employees does this organization have?
- What kind of technologies does this organization use?
- What does it take to succeed here? Can you give me some examples?
- How is success measured in this position and in this organization?
- What kind of orientation or training is provided?
- Does this position function mainly alone, or in a team setting? Tell me about the team.
- What is the greatest challenge currently facing the department or organization?
- What are the major strengths/weaknesses of this work group?
- How is this organization different from its competitors?
- What is this organization's management philosophy?
- What is the history of this position, and what changes do you anticipate?
- What is the growth potential for this position a few years from now?
- What is the next step in the interview process? What is your time frame?
- What can I do to further demonstrate my interest in this position?
- As the Hiring Authority, tell me about your management style and what traits best match with your personality to produce the most productive working environment.
- What are the specific projects that I will be working on?
- What are the three key contributions that you would expect from my performance?
- Can you describe a typical day in this role?
- How would you describe the growth and financial stability of the company, as well as its future growth possibilities?
- What is the reporting structure within the organization?
- What opportunities for professional development are offered?