

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
&
ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT



UNIVERSITY *of* MARYLAND
EASTERN SHORE

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

CAREER FAIR SUCCESS GUIDE

Career Fair Success

**Career & Professional Development Center
Annually sponsors three Career Fair events.**

Fall Career/Graduate Professional School Fair, Thursday, October 2, 2014

UMES & SU Teacher Recruitment Day Consortium, Thursday, March 26, 2015

Annual Spring Career Fair, Thursday, February 26, 2015



Regardless of your major, year in college, or future goals, there are numerous benefits to attending a career fair:

- Increase your chances of receiving an interview with an employer.
- Expand your network of contacts.
- Investigate positions, occupations, and/or career fields.
- Learn more about employers and their available positions.
- Receive sound job search advice from seasoned company recruiters.

Simply attending a career fair is not enough. You must be prepared, e.g., professionally dressed, have an adequate resume, and ask thoughtful questions. Plan your strategy for which employers or graduate schools you wish to approach. Take the time to research these organizations. Be prepared to market yourself within 60 seconds: introduce yourself, tell the employer why you are there, summarize your education & experience, and reiterate your interest. Make a good first impression!

Survey the room and determine where employers are located. Consider in what order you want to visit them. If there is a long line to speak to a representative, keep moving and return later. You want to maximize your time at the career fair. When it's your turn to meet the employer's representative, smile, shake hands firmly and begin your sixty second "commercial." Don't speak too quickly, too loudly, or too softly. Plan to ask one or two well thought out, meaningful questions.

At the end of your conversation, be sure to thank the representative for his or her time. Leave a copy of your resume, if applicable. Ask the employer for a business card and company literature. If the employer indicates they do not have a position in your field, ask for the address for the Office of Human Resources. The person you are talking to may not be fully aware of all the opportunities offered by their company. Plan to write to the company within one week after the contact.

As soon as possible after the career fair, write down a few notes about your conversation. You may want to bring out a few memorable points that were discussed during your visit to include in your follow-up letter. Follow-up is essential. Often candidates do not make the effort to send thank-you letters; why not give yourself the competitive edge! You have made the most of your career fair experience when it results in subsequent interviews.

Adapted from Atlanta University Center Career Day Guide, 2003

What Employers Expect at Career Fairs*

According to www.jobweb.com, more than one-third of recently surveyed employers expect students who attend Career Fairs to be familiar with their organizations. Students should check with the Career & Professional Development Center for an updated listing of companies who will be attending a specific Fair. Then, research the companies you're interested in, using the Internet and other sources that the Career & Professional Development Center staff can help you identify. Employers are also very largely mindful of student dress at Fairs in that 32% of companies surveyed expect that students wear business suits; 56% indicated that casual business attire is acceptable. Only a very small percentage responded that dress is not important. In terms of what to bring, the vast majority of employers are looking for hard copies of student resumes. Cover letters also ranked high among what students should bring to a Career Fair. The survey results indicate that student follow-up is important. It is noted that many employers do not extend an interview invitation unless the student sends a thank-you-letter or makes a phone call to them after the Fair.



SAMPLE "ICE-BREAKING" QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ATTENDING A CAREER FAIR

1. Hello, my name is _____ and I am a _____ Major. Can you describe the entry-level positions within your agency/corporation which are commensurate with my educational background?
2. What job opportunities exist with your agency/corporations? Can you tell me about your training programs?
3. Does your agency/corporation have internships/co-ops? How do I apply?
4. What specific skills are you looking for when selecting a candidate for this position?
5. What does your agency/corporation consider a top priority when selecting job candidates? Grades? Major? Internships/co-op experience? Extracurricular activities?
6. How long have you been employed with the agency/corporation? What was your college major and how did your major coincide with the career path that you are currently pursuing within the agency/corporations?
7. What percentage of minorities do you currently employ in your company? In what positions?
8. I am glad to see that your agency/corporation is here. Your literature raised some questions for me. Is it correct that you need _____ majors with expertise in _____ skills?
9. Along with a salary, what additional benefits (housing/transportation) do you offer to interns?
10. I am very interested in speaking with you further regarding your agency/corporation and realize that there are a number of other people waiting to speak with you. When will I have an opportunity to speak with you further?

*Excerpt from The Career Voice, Spring 2005 issue, a quarterly publication.

How To Sell Yourself at the Career Fair

A Career fair is a great place to gather information about potential employers and make contacts that can lead to your first job, internships or summer positions. Below you will find some advice on how to make the most of your time.

What to Take to the Career Fair

1. Make sure to take copies of your resume. Maybe 25 to 30 copies of your resume depending on the size of the event. Be sure it represents your knowledge, skills, and abilities effectively. It needs to look professional, be easy to read, placed on resume paper and be free of typos. If you are looking at several career options, you may want to have two or more targeted resumes with different career objectives!
2. You should always be professionally dressed, have a smile, a strong handshake, and a positive attitude. First impressions are important. When approaching an employer, smile, and shake the employers hand when you introduce yourself.
3. A 30-second "sales pitch." Hand the recruiter a copy of your resume and be prepared to expand on it quickly! Share basic information about yourself and your career interests like this: "Hello, my name is Bev Brown and I am a senior here at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore majoring in English. I'm very interested in a marketing career. As you can see on my resume, I just completed an internship in the Marketing Division of the Core Incorporated in Philadelphia. I've also taken some courses in business marketing. I'm very interested in talking with you about marketing opportunities with your organization."
4. Gather information about the organizations which will be attending, especially those you are interested in. Gather information as you would for a job interview. To maximize the brief time you have with each employer, you need to know how your skills and interests match their needs. And don't just concentrate on the "big names." There are often great opportunities with companies with which you are not familiar.
5. You must be full of energy! Career fairs require you to be on your feet moving from table to table for an hour or so. Each time you meet someone, be at your best, and be professional and as refreshed as possible!

Things Not to Do at the Career Fair

1. Don't walk around the fair visiting booths with a group of friends. Interact with the recruiters on your own. Make your own positive impression!
2. Carry your resume in a professional looking portfolio or small briefcase. It will keep your resume neat and handy, and gives you a place to file business cards of recruiters that you meet.
3. A career fair is a professional activity and often your first contact with a future employer. So you need to be dressed in a professional manner.
4. Do your homework! Research the companies just as you would for an interview. You'll be able to focus on why you want to work for the organization and what you can do for them.
5. Don't come during the last half hour of the event. Many employers come a long distance to attend the fair and may need to leave early. If you come late, you may miss the organizations you wanted to contact!

5 Things to Take Home From the Career Fair

1. Make sure you get business cards from the recruiters you have met. Use the cards to write follow-up notes to those organizations in which you are most interested.
2. You should have a wealth of notes about contacts you made. Take paper and pen with you to write down important details about particular organizations, including names of people who may not have had business cards. Take a few minutes after you leave each table to jot down these notes!
3. This is an opportunity to gather information about organizations you have contacted. Most recruiters will have information for you to pick up, including company brochures, computer diskettes or CD's, position descriptions, and other data. You won't have time to deal with these at the fair!
4. Attending such an event will leave you with a better sense of your career options. If you have used the event correctly, you will have made contact with several organizations that hire people with your skills and interests. In thinking about their needs and your background, evaluate whether each company might be a match for you.
5. Have self-confidence when interacting with employer representatives. A career fair gives you the opportunity to practice your interview skills in a less formidable environment than a formal interview. Use this experience to practice talking about what you have done, what you know, and what your interests are.

Adapted from JobWeb.com—Career development and job-search advice for new college graduates. Article by Sally Kearsley