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Career Fair Tips:

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**Career Fair Tips**

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Career Fairs are a great way to connect with employers to collect information, submit resumes or arrange interviews. Goals for the career fair should include:

* Discuss job search strategies, interview and resume tips, or finding an internship or co-op with recruiters.
* Develop a job search network – collect referrals to other departments/divisions within an organization.
* Meet with new, less familiar organizations and discover unexpected opportunities.

Career Fair Prep

* Perfect your résumé - Have your résumé critiqued by PPEL or ASCC.
* Get your professional clothes ready (typically, business casual)
* Practice your 60-second elevator pitch
* Research the employers you want to meet with and prepare a list of general and specific questions

What to Bring

* Multiple résumés - Bring 10-15 copies to the fair, but be aware that some employers cannot accept hard copy résumés and will ask you to apply online (due to federal regulations).
* Business cards

1. Dress appropriately (business casual) - Think of the Career Expo as your first interview. A dark pressed suit and tie for men and clean pressed pants suit (or skirt) for women is always appropriate. Skirts should be not shorter than 2" above the knee. Wear comfortable professional and polished shoes. Be conservative with the cologne, perfume and makeup (some recruiters may be allergic to the smells). If you can go without your backpack, do so. Instead, carry a portfolio with a notepad, copies of your résumé, a pen, and any other pertinent information. If you carry a purse, keep it small. Avoid visible piercings and tattoos.

* Padfolio, notepaper and pen

During the Fair/Expo

1. Turn off your cell phone and don't chew gum or candy.
2. Arrive early. Be there when recruiters are fresh and attentive. Arrive before the majority of other students get there.
3. Walk around to meet employers alone—you might have friends at the fair who you check in with, but don’t travel as a posse
4. Take time to target organizations that interest you. But, also keep an open mind and consider companies you are not familiar with – there are great opportunities everywhere. If a table is less crowded, you will have the opportunity to converse longer with the representative.
5. Be strategic—talk to your top 3 employers first, others if you have time
6. Scan employers' handouts. Instead of just getting in line, approach the table from the side to quietly pick up materials to review. Step back far enough to be able to listen to and observe recruiters speaking to other students. Determine if your 60-second elevator speech needs to be adjusted.
7. Take the initiative and introduce yourself with a smile and firm handshake.
8. Give your resume to the representative. Launch into your 60-second elevator speech. Ask questions from the list you prepared. Ask about the application procedure. Don't ask about salary or benefits.
9. Speak slowly and confidently
10. Examples of appropriate questions: What are the characteristics of an ideal candidate? What are the staffing needs of your organization at XYZ location? What are the travel opportunities/requirements?
11. Ask about opportunities and next steps if there are specific openings
12. Get a business card or a contact name from every person you meet. Write interesting facts, notes or additional contact names on the back of the card. Use this information to follow-up after the fair.
13. Take quick breaks between rounds of visits to freshen up and take a breather
14. Don’t dominate recruiters, be mindful of other students waiting in line
15. If you are an international student, don’t say that you need a job to stay in the US. Address the employer professionally and connect your skills to the needs of the company.
16. Limit your give-away item collecting
17. Thank recruiters after speaking with them
18. Take notes as soon as you walk away from a table

After the Fair

* Take a few minutes immediately after fair to sort through your notes and make a list of follow-up items
* Follow up and thank recruiters of particular interest (don’t have to follow-up with everyone)
* Follow up with online applications, or by sending résumé and cover letter to appropriate contact
* Set up informational interviews with individuals at companies/organizations of particular interest to you, and with alumni in these organizations
* Check in with your career office with specific questions

**Networking Tips**

Networking is a critical part of the job search and is consistently ranked as the number one way students find employment. To be a successful networker, you must come up with a specific networking pitch (60-second elevator pitch). Some things to include:

* Name
* Professional identity (not as student, but as the professional you want to be)
* 3 selling points
  + -Something technical related
  + -Something soft skill related
  + -What motivates you as a professional
* Goal—what kind of work are you looking for? (keep options open)
* Exit statement—Say thanks; say something memorable; have a definite end

Networking is not a one-way street. It is a series of valuable relationships that require ongoing attention. A key component of networking is reciprocation; others help you, and you help them in return. Some ways you might help are: Providing valuable introductions, increasing the scope of other's networks, offering original ideas, teaching a skill, lending support to other's activities, reducing another's workload, contributing objective perspective, showing appreciation, making recommendations, providing feedback, sharing unique abilities. These are just a few ideas. Perhaps you can think of more.

Remember networking is a give and take relationship. Success in networking depends on personal commitment, dedication and follow-up. With that in mind, here are some important keys to creating successful networking relationships.

Networking Do’s

Keep notes (i.e., a card file system. spreadsheet or database).

Give as much as you get from your network.

Report back to anyone who has given you a hand, and give thanks.

Follow up on all leads.

Take advice in the spirit it was intended. (Don't say, "I tried that and it didn't work." or, "You don't understand.")

Pick the right people to talk to.

Be prepared for a slump.

Be patient. If they don't have an answer now, they may be able to get it for you.

Networking Don'ts

Ask anyone for a job while networking.

Be afraid to ask for what you need.

Tell everything to everybody (i.e., why you left your last job).

Pass up opportunities (i.e., social functions).

Expect job offers or for others to make appointments for you.

Be discouraged (if brushed off).

Expect an instant, magic answer. Plant the seed.

Complain about your situation or your last job.

Small talk Examples:

Have you had a good week so far?

How has the weather been in your area?

Did you hear about \_\_\_\_ in the news?

How did you get involved in XYZ company?

What do you like most about working at XYZ company?

Are you from this area originally?

Where did you go to school?

What do you like to do outside of work?

Don't bring up religious, political, or other inflammatory topics. Don't ask anything too personal, such as marital status or family questions.

**Maintaining your Network**

* + 1. Send a quick email, for example, "It was so nice to meet you at the XYZ function yesterday! Best of luck with your son's baseball championship this weekend!" If you want to move things along, you could add, "We started to talk about XXX and I'd love to continue the conversation. How does your schedule look next week?"
    2. Always follow-up with your contacts and give them a report on your progress. Be sure to mention how you followed their advice.
    3. Connect with your network on LinkedIn and remember to reach out to them on birthdays, work anniversaries or new jobs.
    4. Share content you know is relevant to your contact: industry news, new product or service, etc.
    5. Make sure you check in every 4-6 months and that you aren't asking for something every conversation. Networking should be reciprocal and beneficial to both parties.

**Interviewing Do's and Don'ts**

Keep in mind that you are one of many candidates employers are interviewing. You need to be memorable, and stand out, in a good way. To do this, you need to look unique, be informed, and be pleasant. Here are a few tips to keep in mind.

DO:

* Research the company and the position you’re applying for.
* Research common interview questions and practice your answers.
* Dress appropriately for the job you want, be neatly groomed, and dress relatively conservatively. Bring breath mints.
* Map out how to get to the location before the interview, and plan to arrive 10 minutes early. If something happens and you must be late, phone the office as soon as you know that you are running behind.
* Bring all requested paperwork with you to the interview including your resume, an application, references, identification, etc. Extra copies of your resume and a portfolio (if applicable) are also good to bring.
* Be polite and cordial to everyone you meet; you never know whose opinion will count.
* Offer a firm handshake and make eye contact when meeting someone.
* Repeat the person’s name to help you remember it.
* Maintain good eye contact during the interview.
* Approach the interview with enthusiasm about the job and the company.
* Stress your achievements and talents.
* Give detailed answers to questions with examples. Explain how you would go about tackling the assignments and challenges of the position.
* Have an opinion when asked.
* Answer questions like, “What’s your biggest flaw?” intelligently, but honestly.
* Show off any research you’ve done about the company, position, and industry with examples or educated questions.
* Take time to think about how to answer an unexpected question. You can repeat the question to give yourself a little extra time.
* Prepare to answer questions about your salary requirements.
* Ask intelligent questions about the job, company, or industry. It pays to prepare a few before the interview.
* Close by indicating that you want the job and asking about next steps.
* Get business cards from your interviewers, or at least make a note of the correct spelling of their names.
* Write down some notes after your interview so that you don’t forget any details of what was discussed.
* Write a thank you note and send it within 24 hours of the interview.
* Evaluate the interviewer, the company, and the position to be sure it’s right for you.

DON’T:

* Rehearse your answers so much that you sound like you’re just reciting from memory.
* Dress too casually, too flamboyantly or in revealing clothing.
* Arrive smelling (too much perfume, cigarette smoke, etc.).
* Be late to your interview if you can possibly avoid it.
* Arrive stressed.
* Bring anyone else with you to the interview (a parent, spouse, friend, child, pet, etc.).
* Address your interviewer by his or her first name until invited to do so. Don’t assume you know how to pronounce their name, either; it’s better to ask the receptionist to be sure. Don’t assume that a female interviewer is a Mrs. or a Miss; use Ms. unless told otherwise.
* Slouch, fidget, or yawn while being interviewed. Don’t chew gum or bring food or drink into an interview.
* Tell jokes.
* Bring up controversial subjects.
* Be aggressive.
* Be self-aggrandizing, insinuating that you are perfect and have zero flaws.
* Take out any frustrations about the job search process on your interviewer.
* Speak negatively about your current or former company, boss, or coworkers.
* Lie.
* Offer up any negative information about yourself if not asked.
* Make excuses.
* Be afraid to ask for clarification if you don’t understand a question.
* Answer every question with a simple “yes” or “no” answer.
* Bring up personal or family problems.
* Ask personal questions of your interviewer.
* Answer your cell phone, check messages, or text during an interview.
* Act as though you’re desperate and would take any job.
* Act as though you’re just shopping around or interviewing for practice.
* Indicate that you’re only interested in the job because of the salary, benefits, or geographic location. Don’t indicate that you intend the job to be a “stepping stone” to something else.
* Bring up salary, benefits, vacation time, or bonuses until after you’ve received an offer.
* Say that you don’t have any questions.
* Call immediately after the interview to find out if you got the job, or make repeated phone calls.

**Business Etiquette**

First Impressions

How you present yourself to others speaks volumes. People often form first impressions about others within seconds of the first meeting, thus it is crucial to ensure you present yourself a a professional.

1. Stand straight, make eye contact, turn towards people when they are speaking, and smile
2. Your backpack or purse and the things you carry in them say something about you. Messy items may detract from your professional image.
3. Be sure to shake hands, palm to palm, with a gentle firmness
4. Look alert
5. Kindness and courtesy count!
6. Arrive early to meetings
7. Respect people's personal space. This may be different from your own.

Email Etiquette

1. Address your emails with "Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_,"
2. Have a professional email address. Make an address that is a combination of your first and last name.
3. Be sure to check your email regularly while job hunting. Company representatives may ask for an interview in less than 24-hours.
4. Do not use emoticons like smiley faces or hearts, and do not overuse the exclamation point.
5. Use complete sentences and check for spelling and grammar errors. While spell check is helpful, it may not catch every error. And, please, no "text talking."
6. Conclude your email with a professional signature that includes your full name, university, graduation year, phone number and email address.
7. Return emails within 24-hours

Voicemail Etiquette

1. Record a professional personalized greeting. Be sure to identify your full name, what message you would like the caller to leave you, and how you will follow-up. Create your recording in a quiet setting, no background noise.
2. Remove all ring-back tones.
3. Return phone calls within 24 hours.
4. When leaving a voicemail, clearly state your full name and spell it if necessary. State your purpose for calling (30-seconds or less). Slowly state your phone number and consider repeating it along with your name.

**Social Media Do's and Don'ts**

1. Clean up social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, LinkedIn, etc.). Remove questionable items (political commentary, religion, marital status, controversial pictures, or other items) from your site and make your accounts private while job searching.
2. Pick you profile picture carefully.
3. Google your full name in quotes to see what information recruiters could find about you.
4. Do not "friend" on Facebook (or connect via other social media sites) employers with whom you have interviewed.
5. Do not post about your experience on Twitter or Facebook. Employers may be able to access information posted even though you made the content private.
6. Regularly check your privacy settings because they may be modified or lost with new updates.