

## TWENTY-ONE TIPS FOR JOB FAIRS AND NETWORKING EVENTS

Attending networking events and job fairs is an effective way to build your professional network and possibly secure your next job.

1. Pre-register for the event so you can obtain a list of companies participating prior to attending if available.
2. Research companies prior to the job fair or networking event to arrive prepared. If the current list is not available, research the website of the sponsoring group to review the list of companies who attended the last event.
3. Write down questions you plan to ask each attendee. Refrain from asking obvious questions, for example: "What does your company do?"
4. If the event is a job fair or a networking event that has attracted recruiters or hiring authorities, do not waste time networking with individuals representing companies that do not interest you.
5. When you are asked about yourself, focus on your past work experience, skills and accomplishments. If you haven't worked for a period of time stress the skills you possess that are the most transferrable to the jobs and companies you are targeting.
6. Write, practice and master your thirty second pitch.
7. Job fairs usually request Resumes or CVs in advance. If this is a networking event, a Resume or CV can be too cumbersome and uncomfortable to distribute. Take and distribute your resume cards and focus most of your efforts to have meaningful conversations.
8. Prepare answers to common questions asked by individuals at job fairs and networking events including:
  - Tell me about yourself?
  - What types of industries or companies are you targeting in your search?
  - What positions interest you most?
9. Be prepared to discuss your accomplishments and the impact they had on past employers. If you haven't worked for a period of time or are a recent grad, stress accomplishments that highlight your most valuable talents.
10. At a job fair, if a company you would like to work for is recruiting for positions that you do not qualify for, take time to speak to the recruiter. The recruiter can provide you with the names of the appropriate hiring authorities who hire in your area of interest.

11. If you are a recent grad, prepare for questions about your GPA. Stress the major or course work that highlights your best qualities.
12. At a job fair, dress appropriately and practice your approach to reduce your level of stress or nerves. First impressions are extremely important because this recruiter or hiring authority is going to meet many prospective candidates. Dress conservatively making sure the focus is on what you're saying vs what you're wearing. Always wear comfortable shoes because you will be on your feet all day.
13. If an individual you would like to meet is speaking to someone else, do not interrupt their conversation. Wait patiently for the conversation to end and then introduce yourself. Shake the person's hand, smile and make sure to maintain direct eye contact.
14. Avoid using slang words during your conversation. A job fair or networking event can be a ticket to the next step in an interview process or a screening out process. Your conversation must be appropriate for a job interview.
15. Obtain a business card from each person you meet. If none are available write down the individual's name, title, phone number and email address. You need accurate contact information to follow up with this person after the event. Use their name during your conversation with them.
16. At a job fair, bring your CV or Resumes to the job fair in folders which will be noticed by recruiters. Include samples of your work, performance reviews, and transcripts if you are a recent grad and a list of references. This will help you stand out from the other job seekers.
17. Respect the time restraints of the people or recruiters attending job fairs or networking events. They conduct short conversations, form their opinion and then want to talk to other attendees. You have probably 5-10 minutes to stand out. You do not want to monopolize their time. If you've made a good impression this can result in additional conversations, leads or even interviews.
18. Be at your best when you meet individuals at events and project a positive, confident demeanor. Do not say anything negative regarding previous employers or jobs.
19. If an individual asks you if you have any questions, make sure your questions uncover the priorities of this person. If you let them talk about themselves they normally like you better.

20. At a job fair, if possible, determine the recruiters target to hire and the steps in the interview process. This information is important when you are planning your follow up after the job fair which should include a handwritten thank you note sent immediately after the event. Put the words, "Personal and Confidential" on the envelope so no one else opens your note.
21. Never underestimate the importance of connecting with other job seekers or attendees at networking events or job fairs. Often they are actively interviewing and can provide you with job leads or names of contacts. You want to include these individuals in your network so it's important to also get their business cards or contact information. It's easy to connect with individuals thru social media.

Follow these twenty-one tips and you will enjoy a higher level of success when you attend job fairs and networking events.