

How to Make the Most of a Career Fair

Before the Fair:

- Dress – *professional dress is expected*. Interview suits preferred, but a set of neat clothing that you would wear to work in an office is acceptable.
- Make sure your shirt, pants, suit coat are all clean, neat and pressed.
- Men should wear ties that coordinate with the outfit.
- Women should wear a scarf or simple string of pearls (if wearing on open collared shirt), if possible. Don't overdo jewelry; the less the better.
- Make sure your shoes are polished.
- Men – socks that match your outfit. **NO WHITE SOCKS.**
- Women – skin-toned hose. **NO RUNS.**
- Make sure your hair is neatly combed. Men should neatly trim beards, goatees, or mustaches.
- No facial or head piercings – men should remove their earrings. Earrings for women are acceptable.
- Scents – consider using none, otherwise: Men – no heavy cologne. Women – VERY light perfume.
- Neat hands; nails should be groomed (both men and women). Women should wear subtle shade of polish, if any at all. Clear coat is a good idea.
- Take along some breath mints to chew right before you go into the fair.

Networking:

Networking is the art of expanding your job search to include as many people as possible. It works best for those who ask their contacts for advice and the names of other persons who might provide advice, rather than directly asking for jobs. Authors of job-search books write that over half of all jobs never get advertised but exist in the “hidden job market.” These jobs go to candidates who know the person doing the hiring. It is the most effective way to be known by employers in your field.

The ABC's of a Job Fair:

- A. Upon your arrival, hang your coat on the racks provided. Keep your arms free to distribute resumes and shake hands with employers.
- B. Review the listing of employers in attendance. Review the company literature.
- C. Be assertive without being overbearing. Show interest and enthusiasm by smiling and speaking clearly. Make direct eye contact and shake hands firmly. Be prepared to deliver a one-minute “commercial” about yourself that promotes your skills, qualifications and interest in the organization to the employer. “Hello, I’m Chris Smith. I’m a business major and will graduate in May. It’s good to see your company here. I’m interested in talking to you about internships, full/part-time jobs...”
- D. Ask if they are collecting resumes. **Ask for a business card** and thank them for their time. Pick up your own copy of company recruiting literature.

Questions to Ask:

- What specific skills and experiences would you look for when hiring someone for your organization?
- What are typical entry-level job titles?
- What kinds of career opportunities are currently available for my degree and skills?
- Are there any written materials you suggest I read?
- Do you have any advice for someone interested in this field?

Career Fair Follow-up

Any serious networking opportunities or interviews **MUST** be followed with a thank you letter. The following is a sample follow-up thank you letter. The margins should conform to the default settings for a new document on your word processing program.

Date

Candidate's Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Recruiter's Name
Recruiter's Title
Name of Organization
123 College Street
Sometown, Ohio 45678

Dear _____:

It was my pleasure to meet you at the Ohio Council of Criminal Justice Education (OCCJE) Career Fair on (date). Thank you for the opportunity to talk to you about _____. After reviewing your organization's materials, I am convinced that my abilities and professional goals will be an asset to you.

State your abilities and professional goals and connect them to the organization.

Thank the employers for their time and consideration and state that you look forward to hearing from them.

Sincerely,

Your hand written name (4 return spaces between "Sincerely" & your typed name)

Your type written name