



## Tips for a Successful Career Fair

### 1. Conduct research

- Know something about each company at the event.
- Develop a list of specific companies at the event you want to target.
- Put the companies in a list under industries of interest (rank order).
- Divide the companies into an “A” (primary interest) and “B” (secondary interest) list. You also can have a “C” list (few companies-practice speaking with first).
- Prioritize the “A” and “B” list.
- Create a folder for each company.
- Know some specific information about the companies you will target (products, culture, trends, competitors, job postings internal, press releases, whether recruiting on campus, and any other relevant information from company website, Internet searches, articles from newspapers/magazines).

### 2. Prepare a 15-45 second elevator speech

- When approaching the recruiter, be prepared to summarize who you are, why you are interested in that organization, and what you can do for them (key strengths, what you contributed to a previous employer).
- Memorize your résumé and be prepared to discuss everything you listed on it. Have quick examples of your experiences/successes ready.
- Practice speaking slowly and clearly and practice your elevator speech.
- Be prepared to identify what type of job you are interested in pursuing.
- Be able to state what interests, skills, and knowledge you can bring to the organization.
- Answer the question “Why would a recruiter be interested in you?”

### 3. Dress for the job, not the fair

- First impressions are lasting impressions. You should look like a professional when meeting with professional recruiters.
- **Men:** A dark suit (navy), complementary tie, pressed shirt and shined shoes.
- **Women:** Preferably an interview dark suit (pants or skirt). No heavy makeup, too-bright colors, large jewelry, or revealing clothes.
- **Men and Women:** Either no cologne/perfume or very, very light. Make sure hair, nails and breath are perfect. Carry breath mints.
- Pay attention to shoes. Studies have shown initial judgments based on shoes.

### 4. Take your time planning your attack

- When you first arrive, take a few minutes to survey the layout of the room.
- Take note of the location of your targeted companies.
- Practice on another company before hitting your target list and try out your elevator speech.

## **5. Make a good impression**

- Offer a firm, friendly handshake with one hand and a resume with the other.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Consider the recruiter's perspective: he/she will be meeting with hundreds of potential candidates.
- What makes you stand out from the other candidates?
- Have enough résumés available to give to organizations you want to target.

## **6. Behave at the fair**

- DO NOT be a wallflower. As in any networking event you get out of the fair only what you put into it.
- DO NOT hang out in groups!!!!
- When approaching a recruiter, extend your hand, smile, and introduce yourself.
- Be happy and upbeat.
- If not recruiting for your area of interest, ask for the proper contact or what recruiter recommends you do.
- Collect company literature, but do NOT go trick or treating grabbing all the promotional items companies have available is not very professional!
- Be prepared to stand in line. Talk to others in line about what they are finding out from other companies.
- Get to the fair early, not 30 minutes before it ends. Recruiters notoriously leave early.
- DO NOT "hog" the recruiter's time. Once you are finished, move on.
- DO NOT ask questions about location or salary. This venue is "me" focused.
- DO NOT be afraid to ask for an interview.

## **7. Follow up**

- Always ask for a business card for your records and send a thank-you note.
- Send the thank-you note within 48 hours after meeting with the individuals.
- Use the thank-you note to describe briefly an additional selling point that you didn't get to mention at the fair.

## **8. Heed these quick tips.**

- Bring some breath mints to remedy a dry mouth.
- Bring a notebook (portfolio) to record names/impressions/notes.
- Take time to explore, look, listen, learn – you never know what opportunities might arise from talking to other students.
- If you have sweaty palms, bring a handkerchief.
- Wear stick-on names tags on your right side.
- Have a couple of good questions to ask each recruiter.
- Do not overstay your welcome with a recruiter.
- Take a break!!