

How to Get the Most Out of a Career Fair

The Career Fair is designed with the idea that it can be helpful to students looking for full-time jobs, summer/part-time jobs, and internships.

Before the Career Fair

- Research the organizations that might be of interest to you.
- Read literature about the organization in Career Services, social media, or on the Internet.
- Be prepared to ask questions of the representatives. Practice out loud; it helps.
- Know yourself.
- Try to identify specific experiences where you have demonstrated your strengths.
- Backing up all of your skills with specific examples will make you a stronger candidate.
- Know why you want to work for their organization. If you don't know, they won't either.

During the Career Fair

- Make a good first impression.
- Make eye contact immediately when introducing yourself.
- Give a firm handshake to get you off to a good start.
- Remember the representative's name; if you forgot it, casually check their name tag.
- Smile and be polite; enthusiasm is an important quality.
- Dress nicely; ratty jeans will not make the right impression.

Body Language often can speak louder than the spoken word:

- Do not fidget, play with your hair, or rock from side to side.
- Do not look around when talking or being spoken to.
- Do not chew gum.



QUESTIONS? Contact careerservices@jsu.edu or call 256.782.5482

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Communication is critical!

- Listen carefully to what the representative has to say!
- Avoid using filler words such as "um", "like", "you know."
- Show confidence in your voice. The room may be noisy and if they can't hear you, they won't remember you.
- Offer a resume if you have a professional looking one.
- Ask for a business card or write down the representative's name. It is also okay to ask what the hiring procedure is. You want to make sure you're doing it right.

Explore all of your options!

- Speak with organizations that you had not considered before.
- Take the initiative and engage in meaningful conversations with representatives.
- Representatives are here to provide information about their organizations and career fields.
- Representatives are excellent resources in your career search and decision-making process.
- If one table has a long line, make the most of your time by talking with representatives that don't have long lines, even if they're not your top choice. Check back at those tables that had long lines later in the day!

After the Career Fair

- Mailing a thank-you letter is not only appropriate; it can also bring attention to your name.
- You can send an initial or additional resume or a page of references in your thank-you letter; again, point out your strengths.
- You can also call to make sure that your application is complete; when calling, be prepared and know/practice what you are going to say beforehand.



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Questions for Representatives at the Career Fair

First and foremost, questions should be natural. Be yourself. Don't fire off questions; maintain a natural flow. Before beginning with your questions be sure to introduce yourself and establish rapport with the representatives. Listen carefully to their answers. Be courteous. Before leaving, be sure to close the conversation and thank them.

Questions You May Want to Ask Organization Representatives

1. How many employees does your company have?
2. What goals does your company have for 2014-2015 and beyond?
3. What kind of entry level positions exist within your organization?
4. How many employees are in my area of interest (which is...)?
5. Does your company hire on a continual basis or just at certain times of the year?
6. How long does the hiring process take?
7. What does your organization consider the 5 most important qualities in an employee?
8. Are graduate degrees important? If so, in what areas?
9. What courses do you suggest in order to be a successful candidate?
10. Is there a G.P.A. cut-off in the recruiting process?
11. What personality traits are important for success in your company?
12. As an entry-level employee, what can I expect to be doing 2, 5, 10 years from now?
13. What made you choose this company?
14. How long have you been with the company?
15. What has your organization accomplished of which you are especially proud?
16. For how many years does the entry-level employee typically stay with the company?
17. What percent of applicants are eventually hired?
18. What is the retention rate in the company?
19. Do you expect your employees to relocate?

Don't read directly from this list of questions at the Career Fair. If you are well prepared, you can truly be yourself.



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The 60 Second Spiel

Have you ever approached a recruiter and wondered what to say? Have you ever tried to network with someone and been at a loss for words?

The same way not studying for a test hurts you when it comes time for the exam, not preparing a verbal summary before speaking to a recruiter leaves you fumbling for words at the wrong time.

Your verbal summary is...The 60 Second Spiel

The 60 Second Spiel is a short version that includes information on your background, your achievements, and your career interests. It is a brief introduction that lets someone know who you are, what you can do for him or her, and what you're looking for. It demonstrates that you are prepared and articulate. It helps beat out the competition!

So, what should be included?

- 1) Your name
- 2) Your major/degree
- 3) Your top skills or experiences
- 4) What type of position you're looking for (job title or description)
- 5) An ending statement or question

Some examples:

(Do not copy these exactly...use them as guides only. Obviously, if everyone were to copy them exactly, your 60 Second Spiel would lose its unique charm.)

"My name is Jane Doe. I'm graduating in May with a bachelor's degree in organizational communication and English. I've spent the last four months working as an intern with the Downtown Business Association and I'm looking for a position where I can promote companies, plan events, and generate new business for the city. Would I be able to do that at the Huron Chamber of Commerce?"

"Good morning. I am John Doe and I am looking for a progressive company where I can incorporate both my degree, which is in computer information systems management, and my experience at Azusa Pacific, Inc. as a webmaster. My previous supervisor liked the fact that I could find a client's niche and create a website that fit that niche. I'm also very organized and enjoy interacting with people. Do you have positions for webmasters with my qualifications?"



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