



How to be Successful at a Job Fair

Things to Prepare before the Job Fair

A job fair can be an excellent opportunity to market yourself to prospective employers and fine-tune your approach to recruiters. Use industry or community websites to identify upcoming job fairs in your area most relevant to the types of jobs you're seeking. Even if you aren't yet sure of your career path, attend a job fair to get a sense of the pace, atmosphere and types of jobs currently available. Being prepared enables you to make the most of your participation in job fairs.

Do Your Homework

One of the most important things you can do before attending a job fair is to learn about the companies that will be represented. Look at the promotional materials online or in your local newspaper's business section to find out what companies are participating, then determine which companies' recruiters you want to approach. Learn enough about each company to effectively tailor your questions and personal pitch in ways that make you appealing to the recruiter and identify you as someone who can contribute to the company's productivity. You will impress the recruiter as someone who cares enough to do his research and won't waste time with companies that aren't a good fit.

Your Résumé

Review and update your resume if necessary to make it relevant to the types of employers you'll encounter at the job fair. Your résumé should be comprehensive, on high quality bond paper and professional in appearance. Ensure your complete name and contact information is readily identifiable at the top of your resume so a prospective employer can contact you in the future. Print and take enough copies to hand out to all the companies of interest to you.

The "Elevator Pitch"

The so-called "elevator pitch" is the 60-to-90 second promotional speech you use to sell yourself to a recruiter or to



convince a prospective employer to spend more time with you and your resume. Imagine you had just the length of an elevator ride to convince a complete stranger why he should hire you for a vacancy at his company -- think about how you to present your strongest qualifications and relevant experience concisely, but in a way that piques his interest. Before you go to a job fair, practice your sales pitch in the mirror or with a trusted colleague until you can deliver it smoothly and with confidence.

Professional Image

Plan ahead for your appearance at a job fair. Don't just stop by on a whim in your jeans and sandals or on your way home from the gym. Think of going to a job fair like you're going to an actual interview. It's

your opportunity to make a positive and lasting first impression as a confident professional, so dress the part. Men should wear a suit, dress shirt and shoes, and a tie. A tailored suit and blouse or dress and jacket, along with closed-toe heels, are the best choices for women. Your grooming should be neat and professional looking, with minimal jewelry and makeup. Keep body piercings and tattoos covered. Carry a simple leather portfolio for your résumés and any materials you collect at the job fair.