



How to be Successful at a Job Fair

How to Interact with Employers at a Job Fair

Job fairs are a tool used in the job search, similar to browsing online employment listing websites for new opportunities. However, when you attend a job fair in person you are doing more than perusing potential employers. In some instances, you can find yourself in a chat with a prospective employer, explaining your career experience, education and skills. Your behavior at job fairs can become memorable to company representatives, which is good when you are contacted later for a more official, in-depth interview.

Prepare - Give the impression to recruiters, hiring managers and your fellow job seekers that you try to prepare for any eventuality that can occur. Arrive early and maybe wait near the front door, instead of strolling in later. Men and women should wear comfortable business professional clothing and shoes in case long lines result in standing for long periods. Bring at least 20 copies of your résumé, even if you only plan to visit a few employer exhibits. You might become interested in companies who were not advertised as fair participants, but showed up at the last minute. Employers appreciate workers who think ahead.

Body Language - Although job fair attendees are sometimes crowded shoulder to shoulder, professional recruiters and hiring managers still may observe non-verbal body language of individual job seekers. Show that you are a courteous person by walking slowly and carefully, not rushing and pushing your way through the crowds. Wait patiently to speak with company representatives, while they are giving other job seekers undivided attention. Use good standing posture and make eye contact when you do communicate with prospective employers. Avoid standing so close that you invade recruiters' personal space.

Network - Strike up light, but professional, conversation with other job seekers who are standing around you. Don't appear antisocial before you even get to the front of the line to speak to the employer. Collect business cards from other waiting job seekers who might share the same career profession and goals. If they had a chance to work the room before you arrived, ask which employer exhibits have promising job leads. Cautiously ask your fellow job seekers, as well as participating company representatives, for their professional social-networking profile name, and then befriend them online after the fair is over.

Engaging and Grateful - When you finally get face to face with company representatives, introduce yourself with an air of eager anticipation. Many employment experts recommend rehearsing a short commercial or elevator pitch about your career story. Ask intelligent job-related questions about companies and positions. Appear more than willing and comfortable responding to impromptu interview-like questions from recruiters and hiring managers. Close with "How do I apply," if you aren't clear about a company's procedures. Verbally thank company representatives for their time, and send a thank you letter or e-mail after the fair is over, or nudge them on the social networking websites.

For a schedule of job fairs, expos and recruitments, visit the Business Workforce Center Events web page at www.dlt.ri.gov/bwc/events.htm

For online job search and career assistance, please visit EmployRI at www.employri.org. EmployRI is a free, online job service that contains links to thousands of job opportunities. Job seekers can post résumés and apply for positions as well as explore career options and training opportunities.



For job search assistance, please visit a netWORKri Career Center, conveniently located throughout the state. At these career centers, job seekers and employers are matched through quality employment programs and services. Visit www.networkri.org to find a location near you.



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