



How to be Successful at a Job Fair

What to Wear to a Job Fair

Job seekers are not oblivious to the fact that dressing for success is important for landing new employment. In fact, professional recruiters and hiring managers often attend job fairs, conducting unofficial, on-the-spot interviews of promising candidates. Dressing for the job fair is no less important than wearing your best business attire for official interviews that occur later in the hiring process. The labor market is tough and competitive, even at job fairs in the initial recruitment stage, and you want to dress to impress selecting officials.



Event Organizer Recommendations

The organizers and hosts of job fairs often recommend a dress code for job seekers, either advertised online or on a flyer. For example, civil engineers sometimes work in dirty, laborious conditions, wearing casual or uniformed attire. College engineering-fair organizers, though, often encourage graduates to dress in a full, professional business suit for job fairs and interviews. Alternatively, you might research the overall industry dress code based on the job fair's theme and companies that are planning to set up exhibits. Receptionists who answer the main telephone number for hiring employers might know dress code policies, or you can observe or ask other existing employees about the company's preference.

Professional vs. Casual

Managers commonly wish to hire people who exude professionalism. Dress for the job fair in a way that gives the impression you are a capable and smart. Business casual dress is certainly an acceptable dress code for existing employees at many companies across the country, but when you are dealing with professional recruiters and selecting officials to land a job, you don't want to look unprepared or lazy. Men and women are safer wearing two-piece matched suits at job fairs and job interviews.

Additional Considerations for Men

Men can appear conservative by wearing navy or dark gray suits. Long-sleeved, light-colored dress shirts go under your jacket, even during the warmer months. In addition, choose a solid-colored, silk neck tie that you have to hand-tie instead of the clip-on version. Your belt, socks and shoes should also be dark. Dress shoes can include lace-up or slip-on and should match the belt. Shave your face and comb or brush your hair, ideally to match the culture of the male managers and employees in your industry.

Additional Considerations for Women

Women can wear tailored, slightly loose-fitting pants suits, as well as skirts. If you choose a skirt, a general rule of thumb is to make sure it covers your thighs even when seated. In addition, women have more safe choices for suit color, including brown and black, along with navy and dark gray. Shoes include leather or fabric-type. Avoid stilettos and platforms. Conservative makeup, jewelry and hosiery, as well as a small purse complete the professional look. Use perfume sparingly to avoid offending the senses of recruiters at the fair.

Indoor and Outdoor Environment

You might have to wait in line outside the building for several minutes or even hours before reaching the showroom floor to meet hiring companies. If your area experiences record high temperatures on the day of the job fair, some recruiters and hiring managers might understand if you take off your blazer or jacket and leave it in your car or carry it around on your arm. Consider bringing a professional-looking umbrella or poncho in case a thunder shower passes overhead while you are waiting.