



Effective Career Fair Strategies

Present the Best Possible YOU!

Goal for Today

Attending this career fair is about putting your face with the name on your resume. Use the opportunity to meet and network with these employers, but don't expect to leave with a job. You have been successful if you leave with contacts that can be called upon in the next few weeks for an informational interview, job search advice, or you may be the candidate they call for an interview.

PREPARE

Research companies: Create a prioritized list of employers you would like to meet. Research employers in advance so when you approach them, you are able to articulate why you are interested in their organization and can ask relevant questions. Bring your list of questions with you to the fair! You may want to make two lists of companies you want to meet with at the Career Fair. One list is for your top picks and another list for your "Plan B". Visit the booths of "Plan B" companies first to help overcome nervousness.

Prepare your 30-second "Elevator Pitch" to introduce yourself. Be ready to answer some basic questions about yourself and why you are interested in their company and positions. An elevator speech is a clear, brief message or commercial about you. It communicates who you are, what you are looking for and how you can benefit a company or organization. It is typically about 30 seconds, the time it takes people to ride from the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator. (The idea behind having an elevator speech is that you are prepared to share this information with anyone, at any time, even in an elevator.) At the fair, you can use your speech to introduce yourself. Practice your 30 second elevator speech with a friend or in front of a mirror. It is important to have your speech memorized and practiced. Rehearse and practice it out loud. You want it to sound natural. Get comfortable with what you have to say so you can breeze through it when the time comes.

What information might you include in your elevator speech for the fair? Consider sharing:

- * your name
- * year in school
- * major
- * skills
- * Career goals. Include personal information only if it is relevant to the work for which you are applying.

Here are some examples to help you get started developing your 30 second elevator speech.

Hi, my name is Samantha Smith, and I am a senior Environmental Science major. I am looking for a position that will allow me to use my research and analysis skills. Over the past few years, I have been strengthening these skills through my work with a local conservation council on strategies to support water quality and habitats. Eventually, I would like to develop education programs on water conservation awareness. I read that your organization is involved in water quality projects. Can you tell me how someone with my experience may fit into your organization?



Nice to meet you, my name Andrew Bond... I am a senior studying Computer Information Systems. I hope to become a computer programmer when I graduate. I have had a couple of internships where I worked on several program applications with a project team. I enjoy developing computer applications for simple business solutions. The position you have listed in Job Link seems like it would be a perfect fit for someone with my skills. I'd like to hear more about the type of project teams you have in your organization.

Update and print your resume: Print enough resume copies for your prioritized list plus at least 10 extra copies. Carry in a portfolio or professional folder. You may also want to bring copies of your unofficial transcript. Get ready for interviews! You may have interviews the day of the fair or shortly after.

EXECUTE

- * **Arrive early** and familiarize yourself with the floor plan
- * **Introduce yourself:** Be sure to have a firm handshake and a smile. Speak slowly and clearly. Relax and be yourself
- * **Network:** Through phone or email, contact the recruiters to let them know you have applied. While in line, talk to other students about recruiters they have spoken to already.
- * **Speak clearly** and loudly enough to be heard through the noise.
- * **Keep an open mind** when speaking with recruiters.
- * **Wear nametags prominently:** list your name, class year, and degree. This will help employers remember you better.
- * **Be prepared:** Deliver your elevator speech. Carry a pen and note pad with you to take notes.
- * **Ask employers about their hiring process and how you can be considered for opportunities.** Ask employers about setting up an informational interview to learn more about their company and opportunities. If an employer directs you to apply online, don't be discouraged. It is important that you make an impression at the booth. Some employers will note if you visit the booth and later verify that you applied online
- * **Request a business card from the recruiter** and check company websites after you leave and apply to any jobs posted that are of interest. Ask about their preferred follow-up method. Thank them for their time.
- * **Make notes:** Consider what you need to remember about your conversation. Having talked with so many companies, you are likely not to remember the details. Make notes in your portfolio before moving on to the next employer.

DRESS PROFESSIONALLY

Dress professionally—a suit is appropriate if you have one, otherwise wear a button-up dress shirt and dress pants. Make sure your clothes are clean and wrinkle free. Wear comfortable dress shoes with matching color dress socks. For men, if you have a tie, wear it. For women, if you wear a skirt make sure it is at least knee length.

Keep your hairstyle simple and facial hair groomed.



FOLLOW-UP

Communicate: Send a note or email to the recruiter (handwritten is best)

Network: Through phone or email, contact the recruiters to let them know you have applied

Organize: You will likely have many business cards that you need in the future. Keep them neatly organized for easy reference.

Example Email:

We met at the Nashville College to Career Fair in February.
I wanted to let you know that I have continued to keep up with your job openings through your company website and just applied for the ____ position that was posted last week.
I wanted to see if you needed any additional information from me because I am excited for the opportunity to work for _____

EMPLOYER'S ADVICE: HOW TO IMPRESS AT THE CAREER FAIR

- * Share a confident elevator pitch that highlights the most remarkable thing they have done to demonstrate they are passionate about education.
- * Make eye contact, approach us, and ask questions. We are happy to meet with you; that is why we are here.
- * Make sure you are professionally dressed.
- * It is impressive when a student has done their research and knows what my company does. Don't ask me what we do.
- * Demonstrate that you've looked at our organization and know something about it.
- * Students should be confident and enthusiastic.
- * Ask good questions. Avoid questions which have answers that can be easily found on the company website.
- * I expect quality follow-up after the event. A handwritten thank-you note—personalized and well-written—is what impresses me most. An email thank-you is appropriate too.

For additional tips and information on resume writing, interviewing, and networking, check out the Nashville Area Career Fair's website.



Professional Dress

Present the Best Possible YOU!

Women

- Suit or tailored dress in solid or subtle color, no extreme slits.
- Polished and closed toe shoes, basic dark pumps with medium or low heels.
- Nails subtle if polished, clean and not chipped.
- Makeup should be minimal.
- Clutch or small shoulder bag, choose between an attaché case or handbag (not both).
- Simple and basic jewelry, one ring per hand with the exception of the wedding set.
- Always wear hosiery and keep color neutral.



by citirecruitment

Men



by mconners

- Navy, charcoal gray or pinstripe suit.
- Shined shoes. Tassel loafers, wing tip or lace-up shoes preferred.
- Clean nails.
- Conservative red or navy striped solid tie, simple and neat.
- Solid white shirt.
- Avoid flashy cuff links, rings, or neck chains.
- Over the calf dark socks.
- No strong fragrant cologne.

Tips:

- Leave heavy purses and bags in your vehicle.
- Refrain from playing with keys or change in your pocket.
- Do not take all available giveaways from employer booths. How will you carry them?
- Posture is important too. Stand up straight. Take a break if your feet hurt.
- Remove excessive jewelry. Employers should not be able to hear you jingle.

Networking: The Hidden Job Market

Looking for a job? Many available jobs are never advertised online or in any print media. So how can you learn about these “hidden” jobs? The answer is networking. Recruiters continue to tell us 2/3 of jobs are filled by referrals.

What is networking?

Networking accounts for a substantial amount of all job offers. It means using personal and professional contacts to help you become aware of positions that may be open within a variety of organizations.

The Purpose of Networking

Through the process of networking you can let people know the following:

- You are actively looking for a job
- Your skills
- What type of career you are seeking

The people in your network may be able to refer you to organizations that are currently hiring or even help you to secure interviews or actual job offers.

Who’s in Your Network?

As a college student, you may think that you have no contacts that can help, but everyone you know has the potential to be a useful contact in your job search. Be inclusive when you decide who is a member of your network! Consider starting with:

- Relatives
- Colleagues from professional organizations
- Friends
- Supervisors
- Classmates, teammates, and coworkers
- Former teachers and faculty

Let these people know your needs, then listen to their ideas and suggestions. Ask them for names of others who might be helpful in your search.

Develop a Tracking System

Develop an excel spreadsheet for keeping track of each phone call, letter, email, interview, follow-up, and promise. Without this, you may soon become quite confused.

Be Professional

Effective networking can be a tremendous boost to a job search, as long as you approach people to whom you are referred in a professional and courteous manner. Most people will be willing to share information because they like to help others and/or they want to stay “well-connected.” When speaking to a contact to which you have been referred, mention the name of the person who referred you early in the conversation.

Return the Favor

Also remember that networking is a two-way street. You are developing a network of people to help you, and you should expect to return the favor. You might do the following:

- Send an article on a topic of mutual interest
- Offer to treat them to lunch
- Send a simple thank you note to individuals who have been particularly helpful

When your job search is concluded, let them know that you have obtained a position and thank them once again. Then, keep in touch with them periodically. They can be vital to your future professional development. If you have further questions about networking, contact your Career Services Center.



Effective Resumes

Writing an Effective Resume

Your resume should be a well-organized profile of your qualifications for a career. Accentuate your most marketable skills and experiences. Use concrete (strong) verbs. Be honest. Your resume should also communicate enough information to an employer to elicit further interest. Omit personal pronouns, avoid wordiness, and don't get bogged down in details.

Components of a Resume

The resume is typically organized into sections arranged from most important to least important. The following is a description of the components of a resume.

Identifying Information

This should include your name, current address, and telephone numbers including area codes. You may want to include a separate email address strictly for employers to use. If you are applying for a job in the city in which you are from, use your permanent address. If you apply for a job in another city, be sure to indicate you are looking to move in your cover letter. Also consider listing your LinkedIn URL if your profile is updated and current. Employers who use LinkedIn will most likely look you up in search of more information about your experience. LinkedIn is an opportunity to showcase additional information about yourself that may not all fit on the resume.

Summary Statement

Prepare a brief, clearly defined statement indicating the field or position in which you are interested. Your career objective represents the theme of your resume, with the remaining information supporting your goal. If you are interested in more than one career field or position, you may need to have different resumes for each professional objective.

Education

For each post-secondary degree (most recent first), list:

- Your college or university (including city and state), followed by your degree, major and graduation date.
- Your GPA only if it is 3.0 or better. If your GPA is less than a 3.0, you may want to identify the GPA in your major, if it is over 3.0.
- You do not need to list all of the colleges where you attended, only where you received a degree. Do not include your high school.

Qualifications or Skills

You may want to include a section which briefly summarizes any skills or qualifications you have gained from work experience and/or extracurricular activities that relate to your professional objective (this is especially helpful if your work experience is not career related). Examples of summary statements are:

- Excellent time management skills developed through working 25 hours per week while a full time student
 - Developed leadership skills by serving as a community assistant responsible for 40 residents
 - Knowledge of MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Visual Basic, C+, SQL
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Writing an Effective Resume (continued)

Experience

In a consistent manner, list your work experiences in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Experiences may include full-time or part-time employment as well as summer jobs, volunteer work and internships. Follow these guidelines:

- Give the names and locations of organization for which you have worked. List position, title, and dates you were employed.
- If your experience is career related (and you did not include a “qualifications/skills” section), state the positive aspects of your work, i.e., accomplishments, acquired skills, and job growth.
- Quantify with numbers, i.e. “cash sales of \$9,000” or “supervised four clerks”.

Honors and Activities

- **Honors:** List any honors which indicate your strong academic abilities, i.e., honorary societies, scholarships, awards and dean’s list. Also include any honors related to character and/or community service.
- **Activities:** Employers look for well rounded individuals who involve themselves with extracurricular activities. Include both college and community activities. List offices, committees and responsibilities.

References

Create a listing of three references with work addresses, phone numbers and email on a separate page. Be sure your name is listed at the top of your reference page. Always make sure that you have permission from individuals before listing them as references. Do not send your reference page with your resume and cover letter unless requested by the employer. Bring your reference page with you to the interview.

Power Verbs

The following is a list of strong verbs that you may want to use in your resume. These words are action-oriented and represent skills areas that you may have that would be beneficial to the prospective employer.

Accommodate	Consolidated	Exhibited	Launched	Planned
Accomplished	Created	Expanded	Maintained	Presented
Accelerated	Delegated	Expedited	Managed	Processed
Achieved	Delivered	Explained	Mastered	Produced
Alleviated	Demonstrated	Facilitated	Mediated	Programmed
Budgeted	Developed	Formulated	Motivated	Proposed
Built	Directed	Generated	Negotiated	Recommended
Calculated	Discovered	Handled	Observed	Reinforced
Charted	Distributed	Implemented	Obtained	Researched
Compiled	Earned	Improved	Operated	Scheduled
Completed	Eliminated	Increased	Organized	Supervised
Composed	Established	Initiated	Participated	Strengthened
Conducted	Evaluated	Instituted	Performed	Updated



Interviewing

During the Interview

During the interview it is your job to convince the interviewer that you are the most qualified applicant for the position. Remember, you only have one chance to make a good first impression!

Do

- Give the interviewer a firm handshake.
- Be enthusiastic, confident, courteous & honest.
- Be aware of your nonverbal behavior.
- Convey interest and knowledge in the position and company.
- Stress willingness, ability and compatibility.
- Avoid the use of non-sentences such as umm, uh, ya know, well, and yeah.
- Always present the best of your background or qualifications.
- Listen to the questions carefully and give clear, concise and thoughtful answers.
- At the close of the interview, establish a date for your next communication.
- Always remember to thank the interviewer for his/her time.

Don't

- Address the interviewer by his/her first name unless invited to do so.
- Let the employer's casual approach fool you-maintain a professional image.
- Dominate the interview or appear arrogant.
- Criticize yourself or discuss your personal problems.
- Speak or act in a nervous manner.
- Ask questions that the interviewer has already answered.
- Interrupt when the interviewer is talking.
- Bring up negative information about past jobs, coworkers or former employers.
- Smoke or chew gum.

After the Interview - Send a Thank You!

It is a good policy to send the interviewer a thank-you letter as soon as possible after the interview (see sample thank-you letter). Be sure to reiterate your interest in the position and the organization. If you get no response from a thank-you letter, or if a date has passed when an employer was to contact you, don't hesitate to phone the organization. Above all, let them know of your continuing interest in them!

Example:

Dear Mr./Ms. (Interviewer's Last Name):

In the first paragraph, state when and where you had your interview and thank the interviewer for his or her time.

In the second paragraph, mention something that particularly appeals to you about working for them, and reinforce a point

If after the interview you thought of something you wish you had said, the third paragraph of the letter is a good place to add it. Reaffirm your interest in the organization and your understanding of the hiring process.

Sincerely yours,

Your Handwritten Signature



Behavioral Based Interviewing Questions

Many employers are moving away from a resume driven style of interviewing to a behavioral format. Behavioral interviews are very probing in nature and are based on the concept of “predictable future behavior.” In other words, what you have done in the past strongly suggests what you will do in the future.

Navigating these interviews successfully requires that you know yourself inside and out. This will require a lot of introspection and soul-searching on your part.

You must be able to:

- Know why you have made the decisions you have made that have brought you to this point in your life.
- Explain and defend your decisions.
- Provide specific examples of where you have demonstrated the proficiencies employers are seeking.

Example Behavioral Interview Questions

1. How have you demonstrated initiative?
2. How have you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do?
3. Think about a difficult boss, professor or other person. What made him or her difficult? How did you successfully interact with this person?
4. Think about a complex project or assignment you have been given. What approach did you take to complete it?
5. Tell me about the riskiest decision that you have made.
6. Can you tell about an occasion where you needed to work with a group to get a job done?
7. Describe when you or a group that you were a part of were in danger of missing a deadline. What did you do?
8. Tell me about a time when you worked with a person who did things very differently from you. How did you get the job done?
9. Describe your three greatest accomplishments to date.
10. Tell me about a situation when you had to learn something new in a short time. How did you proceed?
11. Can you tell me about a complex problem that you solved? Describe the process you utilized.
12. Tell me about a challenge that you successfully met.
13. Walk me through a situation where you had to do research and analyze the results for one of your classes.
14. What leadership positions have you held? Describe your leadership style.
15. Have you generated any new ideas or suggestions while at school or at work?
16. Summarize a situation where you successfully persuaded others to do something or to see your viewpoint.
17. Give an example of when your persistence had the biggest payoff.
18. Describe a situation where class assignments and work or personal activities conflicted. How did you prioritize? How did you manage your time? What was the outcome?
19. How have you most constructively dealt with disappointment and turned it into a learning experience?
20. Describe a situation in which you effectively developed a solution to a problem through compromise.