

Job Fair Tips

Improve your job searching options and take some time to attend local job fairs. It may seem daunting—the crowds are big and there's competition for short attention spans, but it's worth your effort.

You'll have the opportunity to meet with employers that you might not be able to access any other way, plus job fairs and career expos often offer networking programs, resume reviews, and workshops for job seekers.

These tips will help you get ready to attend and maximize your opportunities while you're at a job fair.

Dress for Success

Attend the job fair dressed for business success in your best professional interview attire. Carry a portfolio, not a backpack. Your interview attire should err on the side of the conservative: a neatly pressed, solid color suit, dark dress shoes, and minimal jewelry, accessorizing and makeup. Make sure that all tattoos are covered. Wear comfortable shoes, because you'll be standing in line.

Practice a Pitch

You won't get much time with any one person, so you to make a good impression quickly. Practice a quick pitch that summarizes your skills and experience so you're ready to promote your candidacy to prospective employers. A quick pitch is also called an "elevator speech" because it should only be 30 to 60 seconds long, which is about the same amount of time as a typical ride on an elevator.

With your quick pitch, you'll be able to enthusiastically explain who you are, what your skills are, and describe your career goals. So be ready—write up your pitch and rehearse it over and over. The more you practice this pitch beforehand, the more confident you'll feel delivering it at the job fair.

Bring Supplies

Bring extra copies of your resume, a few pens, a notepad, and a bunch of business cards that include your name, your email address, and cell phone number. You might also want to consider bringing "mini-resume" cards as an efficient way to sum up your candidacy.

Research Companies

Many job fairs and career expos have information on participating companies on the job fair website. Get yourself prepared to talk to hiring managers by checking out the company's website, mission, open positions, and general information before you go.

If you demonstrate knowledge about each company or manager you're talking to, you'll certainly stand out from the crowd. You may also be able to come up with a couple of questions to ask the hiring managers, which also makes a favorable impression.

Arrive Early

Keep in mind that lines can be long, so arrive early, before the fair officially opens. You're better off standing in line outside so you can get in right away than arriving later and walking right in the doors but being stuck with long lines at each table.

Attend a Workshop

If the job fair has workshops or seminars, attend them. In addition to getting job search advice, you'll have more opportunities to network. Be ready to chat up the people you meet and hand out your business cards.

Network

While you're waiting in line, talk to others and exchange business cards. You never know who might be able to help with your job search. Along the same lines, remember to stay polite and professional. Even if you're feeling discouraged in your job search, don't vent to other fair-goers about your situation or about any specific companies. Stay positive and make the most of the opportunity.

Show Initiative

Shake hands and introduce yourself to recruiters when you reach the table. Maintain direct eye contact. Demonstrate your interest in the company and their job opportunities. This is where your research in the companies will allow you to shine.

Be Enthusiastic

Employer surveys identify one of the most important personal attributes candidates can bring to a new position as enthusiasm. This means that employers want to see you smile. Even if you're nervous, stay enthusiastic—after all, great things may come from this job fair, especially if you keep a positive attitude.

Ask Questions

Have some questions ready for the company representatives that illustrate your knowledge of their organization. Employers are not merely looking for the most skilled candidate for the job; they are looking for candidates who are truly interested in their company. The more you engage them, focusing the discourse upon their company's needs, the better the impression you'll make.

Collect Business Cards

Collect business cards so you have the contact information for the hiring managers you met at the job fair. Then immediately after you get home, compile this information into a contact list and use it to send "Connect" requests on LinkedIn.

Take Notes

It's hard to keep track when you're meeting with multiple employers in a busy environment. Jot down notes on the back of the business cards you have collected or on your notepad, so you have a reminder of whom you spoke to about what.

Say Thank You

Take the time to send a brief follow-up thank-you note or email to the company representatives you met at the job fair. This is another reason it's crucial to get the hiring managers' contact information. Sending a thank-you note is a good way to reiterate your interest in the company and to remind company representatives that you're a strong candidate.

Credit: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com>