

Optimizing Your Success at the Job Fair

50 Tips for Job Seekers

Before the Job Fair

1. Take the Job Fair seriously! You're making important first impressions. Employers remember only a few of the hundreds of job seekers they meet at the Fair.
2. Check for a listing of employers that will be participating at the Fair.
3. Research the companies that interest you. Learn who the companies are and what they do. (Check company websites if available.)
4. Be prepared to make conversation and ask relevant/timely questions to employers (this will make you an interesting and memorable applicant).
5. Create a one-minute 'commercial' about yourself. Your 'commercial' should explain:
 - a) Who you are,
 - b) Your qualifications and accomplishments,
 - c) Special skills and values that set you apart from other applicants, and
 - d) One or two specific examples of what you could do to solve actual company problems (how you could benefit the company).

Practice your 'commercial' out loud to feel comfortable. Your delivery of the commercial (confident and enthusiastic, yet natural) is perhaps more important than the content of your commercial. Your objective is to say one truly memorable thing to employers!

6. Resumes – tailor your resume to the specific job(s) you're applying for. (If you're uncertain about the quality and content of your resume, you can contact any of the following: your local Employment Centre, Advanced Education, Skills and Labour; Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work; Empower, The Disability Resource Centre) Take sufficient copies of your resume to the job fair. Make sure your

- resumes are crisp and clean.
7. If there's potential for on-the-spot interviewing or hiring at the Fair, take reference letters and cover letters, and assemble a professional portfolio (that contains examples of work and accomplishments).
 8. Be prepared to answer questions. Review standard interview questions and formulate your responses.
 9. Prepare questions to ask employers: what opportunities are available; what are the responsibilities; what skills are companies seeking in candidates?
 10. Make a prioritized list of employers you'd like to meet with at the Job Fair (this is your target list).
 11. Plan your strategy. Visit booths first that interest you the most (when your energy is high and you're at your best). Do not wonder or roam! Present yourself with a purpose. Don't be shy – be prepared!
 12. Take pens and paper.
 13. Dress for success! Dress in a manner for the job you're applying for. Be well groomed. Treat the Job Fair like any job interview.
 14. Set realistic expectations. Few job seekers are hired on-the-spot at Job Fairs. Be prepared to follow up on promising leads.
 15. Block sufficient time in your schedule to attend the Job Fair. Make preparations to arrive on time.

At the Job Fair

16. Some experts suggest to arrive early or late at the Job Fair. (The first and last people are often remembered while the ones in between become a blur.)
17. Check-in at the registration table. Get a copy of the job fair layout and the employer participation list. Find booth locations of your targeted employers.
18. Briskly (but attentively) walk through the entire job fair. Scope-out employers you want to talk to. Observe which employers are busy and which aren't. Make special note of employers that are conducting secondary interviews, either at their booth or in another location (these are the employers who are serious about hiring). Identify the person conducting secondary interviews and seek that person out!
19. Get a feeling for the entire Job Fair. Then, go and sit for a few moments to compose yourself and to finalize your 'plan of attack'!

Approach your targeted companies

20. From a distance (about 2 meters away), observe and listen to employers interacting with other applicants. Listen to what the employer is asking. Figure out who is in charge. What happens to the resumes (are there multiple resume piles, does anyone write on them)?
21. Determine the highest level employer-representative in the booth. Seek this person out.
22. While waiting in line, review information about the employer you're approaching.
23. As you approach the table, respect other people's privacy as they complete their interaction with the employer.

When you meet with an employer

24. Give an award winning SMILE!
25. Greet each employer with a firm handshake. Make eye contact! Be polite!
26. Introduce yourself. Look confident!
27. State why you have chosen this employer.
28. Try to remember the employer's name. Glance at their nametag.
29. Show interest. State briefly what you like about their company.
30. Deliver your 'one-minute commercial' (that you developed in step 5 above). Be sensitive to the timing and situation before using your 'commercial' – adapt it as the circumstances dictate.
31. Listen carefully to what the employer says. The room may be noisy and busy, but don't be distracted. Focus, focus, focus!
32. Ask questions (the questions you prepared in step 7 above).
33. Answer questions directly, politely, and concisely. Remember, the goal is to be asked back for an 'in-house' interview.
34. Ask about the application procedure and hiring process. What's the timeframe? Is there a convenient time to call to follow up?
35. Do NOT ask questions about salary and benefits (wait until later for these type of questions).
36. Request a business card or obtain a contact name, phone number, fax, and email address. Take brochures or informational materials that are available at the booth.
37. Don't let promotional 'freebies' on the table distract you and do not grab

at them.

38. Thank each employer for their time.
39. If you're given an application form, take time to fill it out neatly and completely. Remember the way you fill out the application is in itself an example of your work.
40. Conduct yourself professionally at all times. You are 'on stage' even as you stand in line or move about the Fair area.
41. Stay fresh! Job Fairs can be exhausting. If you start to get tired, take a break.
42. Network with other job seekers at the Fair. Share leads, resources, and ideas.
43. Keep a list of the employers you meet. Make notes about each company and your conversation with each representative.

After the Job Fair

44. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done!
45. Review your notes from the Job Fair. Evaluate what you think went well and what you can improve for the next Job Fair or interview.
46. Write personalized thank-you letters to companies that interest you. Cite something specific from your discussion. Try to send letters out within two days after the Job Fair. It's okay to enclose a resume with your thank-you letter. This may draw attention to your name once again.
47. Call to make sure the company received your application materials if you don't hear from them in two weeks after the Job Fair. At this time you can check on the status of the position and offer to come in for an interview.
48. Continue to research the companies that interest you. Treat the Job Fair as an initial contact, not the last.
49. Keep accurate records of your contacts, including dates of your letters or telephone calls, and copies of all application materials that you send.

Final Tip

50. Focus on learning as much as you can about what employers are looking for in the people they hire. The primary benefit of participation in the Fair is to collect information and make contacts.