Make Job Fairs Work for You

Candidates for employment can use job fairs to increase their exposure to potential employers and make useful in-person contacts. Job fairs are not simple “show and tell” presentations but can play a significant role for those seeking a career change or a first job. Here are some tips on how to get the most out of job fairs.

Learn the Names of Employers Who Will be Attending

It’s not enough to know that a job fair is about engineering, marketing, or other areas of employment. You should obtain a list of the participating employers as a preliminary to doing research on their organizations and the kinds of people they hire.

Bring One or More Versions of Your Resume

If the employers are apt to be interested in different kinds of skills, you may want to develop several versions of your resume, each highlighting different aspects of your background and experience. Bring plenty of copies.

Know What You are Going to Say to Each Employer

You may have only around 15 to 20 seconds to present your qualifications to each employer, so think carefully about what you want to cover and how best to say it. You may use the same spiel for all employers or vary it depending upon their recruiting needs.

Develop a List of Questions to Ask Employers

You can’t anticipate how much time you may have with each employer; it may range from a few seconds to several minutes. You may be asked if you have any questions and it pays to have one or two good questions ready for each employer.

Take a Last Minute Look at Recruiting Literature

Even though you may have done a lot of research on an employer and studied its publications, the job fair booth may feature some new information - such as details on specific jobs for which it is currently recruiting. So, check this last minute information.

Dress Professionally

Even if recruiters appear in casual attire, it pays to dress in a professional manner - suits should be the norm at a job fair.

Network with Other Attendees

You can learn a lot by talking with fellow job seekers. Their impressions can help you learn more about the participating employers.

Plan for Follow-Up

Learn what you should do to follow up on your best contacts, particularly the name and title of the person with whom you may communicate.

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