

Career Fair Tips

Recruiters use Career Fair to meet prospective employees and conduct preliminary interviews. If they think you're a likely candidate, they will arrange to call you back for a more in-depth interview. During Career Fair, recruiters speak to hundreds of potential candidates, so your goal should be to stand out from the crowd. Here's some common sense advice to help you do just that – in a positive way, of course.

1. Focus.

Employers are attracted to candidates who have clearly defined career goals and objectives. Take some time to reflect on your skills, education, work experience, personality, and aspirations to determine the kind of job you're looking for.

There's nothing worse than telling an employer “I'll take anything” or answering “I don't know” when asked about your interests.

2. Dress professionally.

First impressions count! A well-groomed and professional appearance means you're taking the job seriously, even before you're hired. You don't want to be remembered as the gum-chewing guy in shorts, flip-flops, and a muscle tee who just dropped in on his way to the gym.

3. Bring many copies of your resume.

Be prepared to paper the hall with your resume. Leave a resume with every recruiter you speak with and consider leaving resumes even with those companies who may not have a job opening that's right for you at this time. Like your appearance, your resume should be clean, polished and professional, with your contact information up-to-date and clearly visible. And don't forget to bring pen and paper so that you can make notes as you meet with potential employers.

4. Research companies.

Do your homework. Before attending Career Fair, get to know the hiring companies by visiting their web sites and looking through trade magazines, so that you can familiarize yourself with their product lines and corporate goals. This information will help you ask informed questions about the companies and their positions available, and will show recruiters that you're enthusiastic.

5. Talk to every company.

Even if a company doesn't list the position you are qualified for, talk to the recruiter and leave a resume. They may not be advertising every position. Be sure to ask for a business card so that you can contact them after Career Fair.

6. Conduct yourself as you would for an interview.

Make eye contact, introduce yourself, ask questions, have a firm handshake, smile, stand up straight, don't chew gum, dress professionally, and be confident. Whew! And remember – Career Fair is your “first date,” and probably not a good time to talk salary – that is, unless the recruiter brings it up first.

7. Follow up.

After Career Fair, follow up with recruiters you spoke with to confirm your enthusiasm and interest in a company. You can do this by either making a personal phone call or writing a thank you letter. This helps you leave a lasting impression!

8. Finally, remember the 3 Ps.

Politeness. Polish. Positive attitude. Nothing exudes confidence more than a warm, friendly person who can speak positively and enthusiastically about themselves, the company they're interviewing with and the industry they're looking to enter. Don't just tell recruiters what an asset you are, show them!

From: GIA Career Services at www.gia.edu.