

How To Approach An Employer At A Job Fair

- ***Dress conservatively and professionally:*** ironed shirt, coat/tie for men; tailored suit/dress, ironed blouse, with optional scarf for women; clean nails, shiny shoes, discrete and minimal jewelry, minimal perfume/cologne, neat hair, trimmed facial hair, if male. Show the employers that you know how to present yourself in a business setting. Look at business magazines to study appropriate attire, if you are unsure.
- ***Greet the representative with an enthusiastic smile, a firm hand shake, good eye contact, and introduce yourself.*** “Good morning. My name is _____, and I am looking for opportunities as _____; I notice that your organization is seeking people with my background....” (***)Look up info about the organization *beforehand* on their website, and learn a few relevant facts.) Connect with the recruiter in a personal, yet professional manner. Think of this meeting as a dialogue, conversation, or opportunity to create a positive first impression. Think of what the employer needs, and meet those needs with your credentials and personality.
- Tell the representative what your ***short term and long term career goals*** are and the type of employment you are seeking and ask what opportunities may exist within their organization, either advertised or unadvertised. If no positions are currently available, then ask when might be a good time to contact them again, and when there might be future opportunities. ***Always keep the door open for future possibilities.***
- Tell a little about yourself and what specific skills you have to offer. ***(Prepare a 60 – 90 second commercial about yourself – your skills, your outstanding personal qualities, your achievements that distinguish you from the crowd and relate to your career goal).***
- Ask about the ***duties and responsibilities*** of the positions that fit your interests, education and experience.

- Ask what *qualities, skills and experience* the organization looks for the most in job candidates.
- Ask about the *training program/professional development offerings* for new employees; ask briefly about career progression. Do not ask about salary or benefits at this point. Concentrate on learning the specifics of the job and the company environment to see if it is a good fit for you.
- Offer a *copy of your resume* and *ask for a business card* (you need the address and correct spelling of the recruiter's name for follow-up thank you letters).
- Finally, *thank the employer* for talking with you, and shake their hand firmly good-bye. Ask what the next step might be for you to take to be considered for employment with their organization.
- *Send thank you notes* to each representative with whom you spoke. In the note, ask them for a face-to-face interview at their place of employment at their earliest convenience so that you might discuss your credentials in more detail, and how you can help them reach their organizational goals.
- Some general statistics on career fairs show that up to 49% of well-prepared candidates can receive follow-up interviews from participating employers and that 65% of those candidates receive job offers. The process can take three or more months. If you do not get follow-up interviews, at least come away from the experience with some new information about your job search; make some connection and look for the value in networking. Create a connection for future meetings and opportunities.