

How to Make a Job Fair Work for You!

(adapted from "How to Make Career Fair Work for You!" - Iowa State University)

A Job Fair can be a wonderful opportunity to network with many employers, agencies, and businesses. Like all "opportunities," preparation and practice can increase your chances for success. This handout has been created to give you suggestions to help you make the most of your experience.

What You Can Expect:

- To make job contacts (permanent full-time, part-time, summer, internship/co-op)
- To explore career areas
- To collect employer information
- To learn about current openings and opportunities

Why Employers Attend:

- To attract potential employees
- To increase awareness of their company – publicity
- To fill jobs
- To give information about careers
- To let students know what opportunities exist with their companies

How to Get Ready:

- Research the Companies - <http://www.mnsujobfair.org>
 - Learn which companies will be there and plan which ones you want to talk to
 - Know their products and/or services
 - Even if the company is not looking for your particular major currently, ask about possibilities for future openings in your major or in other departments
- Know Your Career Goals
 - Clarify your goals and know what you are looking for
 - If you need assistance or examples of jobs in your area of study, speak with a CDC staff member beforehand
- Be Ready to Present
 - A polished resume
 - An explanation of why you want to work for the employer, what you can contribute, and how your skills fit their needs

Develop Your "One-Minute Commercial":

- Your commercial should
 - Give your name, major, and graduation date
 - Demonstrate knowledge of the organization
 - Express interest in the organization
- To make sure your commercial is effective, you should write it, rewrite it, and then practice presenting it.

Formulate Questions to Ask Recruiters:

A Job and Internship Fair can be an overwhelming event, especially if you are not sure of what to ask when you approach a recruiter. If you are a little nervous, you may want to practice asking someone else your questions. Remember, the only way to find out the answers is to ask – and this is a great opportunity!

A list of questions to get you started is below. Always begin with introducing yourself. You might say, "Hello, my name is _____ and I will be graduating from Minnesota State Mankato in _____ with a degree in _____." Then ask questions!!

Students who engage employers make an impression!

If you are looking to gain experience (internships):

- I would like to use my skills and get more experience before I graduate. Do you hire interns?
- Are internships available throughout the school year, or just during the summer?
- Could you tell me about a typical internship experience in your communications (or finance, fundraising, marketing) department?
- For what kinds of special projects do you hire interns?
- Are interns frequently considered for full-time employment after they receive their degrees?
- How many interns does your organization typically select each year? What is the application process?

If you are pursuing full-time employment:

- Does your organization have offices in (location of your choice)?
- Does your company serve overseas markets (or customers)? Which departments typically interact with international clients?
- Is marketing for your company handled internally? Which marketing agencies has your company worked with in the past?
- How can I stay informed of employment opportunities with your organization?
- Through my involvement with _____, I've found that I really enjoy using my organizational skills to plan special events. Do you hire people to plan your conventions and/or to coordinate meeting arrangements?
- In what ways does your organization provide continuing education and development for its employees?
- What openings do you anticipate in the next six months (or year, or next few years)? Which department has the current openings?
- When you are hiring for _____, what qualifications do you seek?

Make an Excellent Impression on Recruiters By:

- Dressing and acting professionally
- Exhibiting confidence and enthusiasm
- Making good eye contact
- Having a firm handshake
- Answering questions clearly and quickly
- Asking questions that demonstrate knowledge in your field
- Being assertive
- Having your resume accessible and ready to hand to the recruiter
- Not smoking or chewing gum
- Not asking about salary and benefits in the first meeting

Follow Up:

- Ask for the recruiter's business card
- Ask, "**How do I follow up with you?**"
- Ask if there is a different contact person with whom to follow up
- Find out their decision-making time frame. A recruiter may be on the road for weeks, and may not make any recommendations until they have completed their road assignment.
- If you have any questions that the recruiter is not able to answer, ask them the best way to find the answers.