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## JOB FAIR PREPARATION

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Job Fairs can be intimidating and confusing. Here are some Do's and Don'ts to help you navigate and use job fairs productively.

**Be optimistic** – Greet each employer with a smile and a positive introduction expecting to be closer to employment.

**Don't be intimidated** – You are here to market your skills. Don't become overwhelmed by the crowd; stay focused on the benefit.

**Remember who you met** – Get business cards and company literature from the employers you are most interested in. Also take notes on names and information about the company.

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### Before the Fair

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1. Locate the fair and register if necessary.
2. Get a list of employers – *Knowing what companies will be at the fair ahead of time gives you a competitive edge.*
3. Go to the company website and conduct company/job research to make sure this is a company you want to work for.
4. Go to the careers section and identify jobs that you want to apply for.
5. Target your resume to the position and apply in advance.
6. Prepare your “Elevator Speech.” This is a short, memorized statement about what you have to offer an employer.
7. Use the actual job fair event to follow up with the recruiters: Bring a copy of the job title you applied for and the targeted resume you submitted.

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### Day of the Fair

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1. Bring:
  - Several copies of a 1-page general resume for unexpected positions or networking opportunities.
  - Copies of the targeted resumes for jobs you already applied to.
  - A notebook.
2. Dress professionally.
3. Get to the fair early in the event.
4. Walk the room and locate targeted employers.
5. Approach each employer with a fresh enthusiasm. Smile and reach out for a handshake (if appropriate).
6. Track people you met and jobs you found or followed up on by asking for business cards or writing down names and additional follow up steps.

#### Professional Presentation

- Wear power colors: Black, Gray, Navy
- Choose clothing that fits well and is clean and pressed.
- Polished shoes in good condition.
- Deodorant is a must. (Avoid cologne, perfume or body sprays.)
- Avoid smoking in interview clothes or around professional materials.
- All visible body piercings should be removed. Cover tattoos.
- Clean manicured nails.
- No gum, drink containers or large purses/bags.

## After the Fair

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1. Follow up: Send thank you notes/emails or follow up with a phone call within one week of the fair. (Spell check and proofread your e-mails prior to sending.)
  - Attach your resume.
  - Keep your follow-up brief and to the point.
  - Ask what their timeline is for filling the position and what their preferred method of communication is.
2. Continue to follow up regularly, but don't overdo it. Seven days is a good timeframe and then repeat in another seven days. If no response after two attempts, you can choose to move on.

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## Other Tips

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1. Try to attend the career fair earlier in the event. Toward the end, recruiters start to lose their voices and enthusiasm.
2. If you are attending the fair with a friend or two, separate to make the rounds of employers.
3. The absolute worst way to greet a recruiter is to ask, "So what does your company do?" or, "What jobs do you have open?" Best way is to let them know which positions you have already applied for and give them copies of your targeted resume.
4. Don't give irrelevant personal information. Begin with your elevator speech to keep it focused on your professional skills, abilities and qualifications.
5. Pace yourself. It is easy to get ahead of yourself and become exhausted. Trying to hit every table may be unrealistic.
6. Walk the event to locate your top employers. Don't wander aimlessly from booth to booth. Employers like to believe you want to work specifically for their company.
7. Approach each employer with fresh enthusiasm and energy.
8. Make eye contact and smile.
9. Practice your elevator speech on friends and/or family and start with a few of your second-choice employers before approaching your top choices.
10. Ask each recruiter for a business card or company literature with contact information for follow-up.
11. Don't take too many freebies – many recruiters bring small gifts to career fairs. Feel free to ask to take one, but don't grab more than one. Taking too many extras gives the impression you are only there for the swag, not the jobs.
12. Make notes on meeting with the employer and the company culture to help make a decision about the best fit for you.