

Career Fair Checklist for Career Fair Success

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Are you planning to attend a career fair soon? Are you searching for pointers to help you succeed at the career fair? Do you know the activities job-seekers should perform before, during, and after the career fair?

Use our Career Fair Checklist

1. Activities to accomplish before the event

- ✓ Take the time to read one or more of the articles on [working](#) career fairs, which you can find in [Career Fair Resources](#) section of Quintessential Careers.
- ✓ Go to the career fair Website. Whenever possible pre-register with the career fair and obtain the list of organizations attending the event.
- ✓ Decide on the organizations you are most interested in and conduct research on each. Gather basic information about the company (size, organization, locations, top management), their products, and standing in their industry. [Learn how to research companies](#).
- ✓ Develop a plan of attack for the career fair. Many experts suggest interviewing with your top companies first, then with other recruiters, and toward the end of the day returning to your top choices.
- ✓ Finish polishing [your resume](#). Review for keywords and accomplishments, check for typos and other spelling errors, and customize for each targeted organization (even if it is something as small as inserting the organization's name into [your job](#) objective). Print out extra copies of your standard resume to bring to the career fair -- just in case you need them. Go to the [Resume Resources](#) section of Quintessential [Careers](#) if you need help with your resume.
- ✓ Consider a mock interview if it's been a while since you have been interviewing. If nothing else, review common [interview questions](#) as well as prepare a few questions to ask the recruiters -- ones that can't be easily answered from available company information. Check out these [job interviewing resources](#).
- ✓ Check your attire. Whenever possible, you should wear a well-fitting suit to career fairs. For men, it means conservative shirt and tie, polished shoes, styled hair, and removal of jewelry from all visible piercings. For women, it means a conservative suit (pants or skirt), shoes and pantyhose, styled hair, and removal of jewelry from visible piercings. Oh, and if you are prone to sweaty palms, be sure to pack a handkerchief or something else (other than your suit) on which to wipe your hand. [Read more about dressing for success](#).
- ✓ Create or review your elevator speech -- a 15- to 30-second commercial that succinctly tells the person you are giving it to who you are, what makes you unique, and the benefits you can provide. [Learn how to create your elevator speech](#).
- ✓ Other useful, though not necessary items, for the career fair include a portfolio of your accomplishments and samples of your work, as well as a stack of personal business cards. Portfolios usually get more attention in later interviews, but it doesn't hurt to bring one along if you get a recruiter who is hot to hire you. [Read more about career portfolios](#). Your personal business card, which is not the business card of your current employer, could be a networking card or a resume highlights card. [Read more about personal business cards](#). a>
- ✓ Get a good night's sleep the night before. And, as my students like to add, don't get drunk the night before either. Oh, and packing some breath mints for the long day ahead might also be helpful.
- ✓ Remember to pack pen and paper for jotting down notes, contact information, and other

vital details.

2. Activities to accomplish during the event

- ✓ As soon as you enter the hall, survey the layout and confirm that it matches up with the plan you developed. Then execute your plan.
- ✓ Attempt to establish rapport with each recruiter. Remember to smile, make eye contact, and offer a firm (but not death-grip) handshake. Use your elevator speech.
- ✓ Gather information and materials from each organization's booth. And if they have some goodies (pens, magnets, etc.), feel free to take one, but don't be greedy.
- ✓ Answer questions, showcase your knowledge of each company, but also remember to ask questions so you'll have a better understanding of which organizations are the best fit for you.
- ✓ Ask about the organization's recruiting timetable. Solicit information about the next step in the process.
- ✓ If you are considering relocating to a different state, once you've established rapport, ask the recruiter if you can obtain the name of the recruiter for that area. Better, ask the recruiter to forward your information to that other recruiter.
- ✓ Remember not to overstay your welcome. If the recruiter starts looking over your shoulder, it's time to move on.
- ✓ Don't forget to collect business cards from each recruiter. And if you can't get a business card, be sure to get all the contact information (including the correct spelling of each person's name).
- ✓ Remember that politeness counts. If the recruiter appears thirsty, offer to get a beverage from the refreshment area for him/her. And don't forget to thank each person you speak with for taking the time to meet you and talk to you about opportunities with his/her organization.
- ✓ Network, network, network. Make connections with people -- not just the recruiters but with fellow job-seekers, career professionals, and the like -- the more people in your network, the stronger it becomes.

3. Activities to accomplish after the event

- ✓ Send thank-you notes to each recruiter, thanking them for their time, interest, and help in your job-search. It doesn't matter how you send the thank-you – just as long as you send one. [Read more about thank-you letters, see samples.](#)
- ✓ Reflect on your system, your execution, and your results. What might you have done more effectively? Make some initial plans for improvement before the next career fair.
- ✓ Plan to follow up with each recruiter about two weeks after the career fair. Contact them and express your continued interest with the organization, your assurance of your ability to contribute to the organization, and get more information about next steps in the process.
- ✓ Consider developing some sort of system for keeping track of all the recruiters and potential job leads. [See an example of a job lead log.](#)
- ✓ Remember to find other sources of job leads. Career fairs are a good source, but there are many other ways to generate job leads. [Read more about ways of developing job leads.](#)