

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF A CAREER FAIR WORKSHOP

Overview

- Why attend?
- What to expect
- Preparation
- Maximize your time
- Practice
- Follow-up



Career Fairs: Why attend?

- Learn about specific employers
- Explore career options
- Research areas of interest
- Establish personal contact with employers
- Practice your interviewing skills informally
- Apply for jobs and internships
- More??

Why Employers Attend

- 97% provide job opening and company info to solicit applicants and maintain visibility on campus
- 84% discuss company benefits
- 13% interview students and make job offers

NACE Journal survey (National Association of Colleges and Employers)

What to Expect at Career Fairs

- Most fairs are held in the HUB Ballrooms or in Mary Gates Hall Commons
- 100+ employers attend at larger events; 10 - 20 employers for smaller events
- Employer reps at tables and/or booths
- Several hundred students, alumni, and others attending and mingling
- Lots of noise! Lines for more popular employers

To get the most out of the fair...

- It is helpful to:
 - ▣ research employers and positions in advance
 - ▣ identify how your background connects to employers' needs
 - ▣ have a plan for navigating the fair to ensure you meet with the employers you targeted

Researching Employers

- To see employers attending - go to the career fair website and click on the company's name to view the website.

iSchool Employer Connections Fair:

www.ischool.washington.edu/resources/employerfair/participants.aspx

- Websites: [Researching Companies Online](#), [Hoovers.com](#)
- Impress employers by knowing what they do

Develop your resume

- One page is best
- Include your education and experience that shows how you connect with the employer mission and positions
- More information and assistance with resume reviews:
 - iSchool Employer Connections Fair website: www.ischool.washington.edu/resources/employerfair/students.aspx
 - UW Career Center website: <http://depts.washington.edu/careers/>

What to Wear

Business suits seem to make the best first impression

Business casual is acceptable



Wear what you think will make your best impression and be comfortable

Plan where you might leave your book bag if you don't want to carry it at the fair



What to bring to the fair

- Multiple (20+) copies of your resume – some of which may be targeted to your preferred employers

- Pen

- A business notebook or portfolio –
 - where you can keep resumes, business cards, employer information

 - a notepad with potential questions you might ask (identified from your research) and where you can record info

Plan Your Strategy

- Do your research to target your top 5-7 employers
- Upon arriving – pick up an event program and locate your targeted employers
- Approach lower priority employers first to practice your introduction
- Be alert to other conversations while you are waiting; may identify other potential employer contacts
- Be open – there may be a company there that wasn't one of your top targets, but it may be a perfect fit. As time allows, try to connect with as many companies as possible.

Meeting employer reps



- Typical time spent with a recruiter: 3 - 7 minutes
- Give a brief (1- 2 minute) personal introduction
- Show how your background and strengths match with employer needs
- Offer your resume
- Don't apologize for lack of experience

Questions to Ask

- What sets your organization apart from others in the industry?
- What is it like to work for your company?
- How do you decide to choose one candidate over another?
- How might I make myself a stronger candidate?

Write Your Personal Introduction

- Refer to the examples
- Write your own personal introduction
 - Mention your **major, area of interests**, related **internship or work experience**
 - Indicate **2 – 3 strengths**
 - Show **enthusiasm** about applying your background in their work setting
 - Finish with a question to keep the conversation going

Practice Your Approach

- Practice this aloud to a friend or colleague.
- Introduce yourself and give your Personal Introduction
- Speak clearly and concisely
- Maintain good eye contact
- Smile earnestly
- Show enthusiasm and interest

Follow-up

- Be sure to ask for the employer reps' **business cards**, or at least get their names
- Ask who is the **most appropriate contact**
- Ask about the **best method for follow-up** (email, letter, phone, web page...)
- Send a **thank-you note** re-affirming your interest and include a more targeted resume
- **48-58%** of employers expect follow-up (NACE*)

*(National Association of Colleges and Employers)

When you might expect to receive an interview request...

- 50% within 2 weeks
- 31% within 2 – 4 weeks
- 13% within 4 – 6 weeks

NACE survey (National Association of Colleges and Employers)

Final Points

- Remember – preparation and practice make it easier to be yourself when you meet with employers
- Smiling helps to reduce the tension for them and for you!
- Make the most of it...this is a great opportunity to network and learn more about potential employers.