



## *How to prepare for a career fair...*

A career fair, what's the big deal? Plenty. Think you should just show up and take the free stuff before you leave? Think again.

A career fair is an excellent opportunity to develop contacts, research the job market, obtain information on specific employers, drop off resumes, and most importantly, possibly find a job!

### **Why prepare?**

- A. Employers at career/job fairs always have current and future hiring needs. Those attendees that are the best prepared will have the inside track on landing those jobs. Making a good impression with the representative will get your name to those who make the decisions on hiring if they aren't right in front of you!

### **What should you do?**

- A. First, ensure that you have all of the details; time, place, employer listing, etc.
- B. Second, decide which companies you know you want to speak to with your available time. Don't just wander around aimlessly. You should have 4 or 5 targeted employers.
- C. Third, prepare a good quality resume and print 7 or 8 copies. *Get help if you need it* to ensure you are putting your best foot forward. The resume is your first chance to make a great impression!
- D. Fourth, make a plan. Have some goals in mind to accomplish. Are you researching companies for the future? Networking? Actively seeking a job? Answer these questions before deciding which companies to speak with.

## **The day of the fair...**

Allow yourself as much time as possible. You never know when a casual visit could turn into a chance interview. This also means that you should dress accordingly, if possible.

Use the plan you developed to start with your targeted employers. These are the ones that you should make certain you meet with. Give them your resume *and* your attention. Once you have done this, you should devote the rest of your time to other employers that may have related positions of interest for you or that you are just curious about. You can never gather too much information!

Conduct yourself in a manner that is professional and mature. Treat everyone with courtesy and respect at all times. Employers notice bad, rude, or unprofessional behavior and will remember you for the wrong reason.

Finally, have fun! This should be an enjoyable experience and provide you with an opportunity to learn about employment options either now or when you graduate.

**Want advice from the horse's mouth?** Here are a few comments from employers who attended the last career fair:

- Students should be prepared with resumes and dressed accordingly.
- Teach students how to dress (no cell phones or sunglasses).
- Students didn't know what they wanted; they would say "what type of job do you have for me?"-not professional
- Participants need to be prepared to talk about careers.
- Encourage students to stop by each booth and get information about the company.

Here is a compilation from the employer satisfaction survey:

