

HOW TO WORK A CAREER FAIR



Career Fairs provide you with an invaluable opportunity to explore career paths and learn about employment opportunities in a wide range of industries. Along with specific career fairs sponsored each year by Pace University's Career Services, there are numerous career fair events hosted by a diversity of outside organizations such as the NAACP and Women for Hire. We suggest you search the Internet for events in the city and state of your choosing and review the companies attending in advance.

Since Career Fairs can be overwhelming, below are a few tips that may help your experience be a successful one.

- **Dress as if you are going on an interview.** Both men and women should wear a conservative suit and carry a professional looking portfolio. You might want to wear professional but comfortable shoes.
- **Bring extra copies of your resume.** To look most organized you may want to consider having a manila folder for each company you plan on exploring and keep them inside your portfolio.
- **Do your homework.** Many Career Fair web sites will list the companies attending, so you can identify which companies you are most interested in and research them prior to the event.
- **Prepare your 30 second infomercial beforehand.** Remember a recruiter is there to get to know quickly if you are a possible fit for his or her company. Your infomercial is a chance for you to concisely tell them what they need to know. It should include your name, your degree, when you graduate, your strengths and goals, and why you are interested in the company. Let them know right away that you have done your homework. If you are concerned that your GPA is lower than you would like due to situations such as working full time while in school, work that into your infomercial. Also, remember to tell them whether you are looking for a full time position or an internship.
- **Get to the Career Fair early.** This will enable you to understand how the room is set up, get a directory and plan how you are going to work the room. It will also give you a few minutes to relax and check your appearance once more.
- **Maximize your time. Network and listen while you are on line.** Talk with and listen to other students. If you are nervous or shy, it might help you to listen to the interactions between the recruiter and students ahead of you to help you personalize what you are going to say.
- **Meeting the recruiter.** Always remember to shake the recruiter's hand and clearly state your full name. Students around you may be talking and you want to ensure the recruiter heard your name. Before you walk away, leave a copy of your resume and ask what the next step is.
- **Prepare a list of questions designed to increase your knowledge about career opportunities.** Attending career fairs and speaking with recruiters gives you a chance to learn more about a future employer and/or a specific industry. Ask questions about industry trends, job openings, career paths, benefits, training, and skills the company has identified as key.
- **Before you move to the next company's table, remember to ask for the recruiter's business card and pick up any information that is available.** After the career fair, send the recruiter a thank you note. Try to refer back to your brief conversation or note something that you read in the literature that was given to you. With the letter, include another copy of your resume and thank the recruiter for spending time with you.
- **Employers at Career Fairs have varying agendas.** Recruiters come to career fairs not only or not always to promote specific positions. They may wish to use the event as a venue to promote their company. These "mini information sessions" are a chance for you to make an informed decision about whether you would want to work for their organization.
- **Many companies ask you to apply directly on their website.** While this request may cause you to feel dismissed, don't despair. These days companies need written records of applicants for statistical tracking. It is also a way to document all the applicants who have taken a serious interest in the positions available.
- **Sometimes it appears that there are "no jobs in my industry".** Try to look at the career fair as an opportunity to get "face time" with a recruiter. Even if that person is not hiring for the job function you have an interest in, she or he may be able to forward your resume to the appropriate person within the company. *If nothing else, talking to the recruiters is an excellent way to improve your networking skills, practicing your 30 second pitch and getting comfortable marketing yourself as a viable candidate.*

REMEMBER: Be prepared and arrive early so you do not become overwhelmed. If you do become overwhelmed, take a break, relax and then continue with your plan.

Sample Career Fair Introductions

Hello. My name is Serious Mary and I am a senior economics major at Pace University. I noticed on Acme Financial's web site that you have openings for financial managers, and I am interested in a position in this capacity. Last summer, I had an internship with Johnson Financial and was able to participate in a variety of company operations. This confirmed my desire to become a financial manager for a top-10 firm, such as Acme Financial. Could you also tell me about your financial management training program?

Hello, I'm Eager Jones. I'm a senior here at Pace University and I'm majoring in English. I'm very interested in a marketing career. I just completed an internship in the Marketing Division of the XYZ Company. I have solid communications skills and have taken several marketing courses. I'm very interested in learning more about marketing opportunities within your organization.

Hi! I'm Ambitious Adam. I'm graduating in June with a degree in Information Systems and after checking out your web site I am really interested in learning more about current or upcoming career opportunities. Here's my resume: You'll notice I've been working at the Computer Lab and have also been involved with campus activities so I think that I'd be a great addition to your team!