

Employers: How to make the most of a Career Fair

1. Be Prepared—Promote Your Organization:

Products/Services: Educate candidates on what your company does, how you do it, current initiatives, goals/directions, etc.

- Savvy students will have done their homework ahead of time, but even they can benefit from a one-on-one networking opportunity with recruiters.
- Discussions about your products, how things work at your company, and current initiatives can give the job seeker tips on what to use in a company specific resume/application, and even help prepare them for an interview.

Programs: Offer insight about management leadership initiatives, career tracks, continuing education support, new hire support (moving expenses, etc.), etc.

- In today's hiring market, sharing company specific tidbits can make your organization stand out and give the candidate a clearer idea about why employment with you (and NOT your competitor) may be a better match.

Positions: What you are currently looking for and expected growth areas.

- Career Fair vs. Job Fair: Students come to career fairs not just to job hunt, but to help them figure out a good career path. Consistent outreach via career fairs creates a hiring pipeline.

Processes: Avoid sending students to the "black hole" of online application without first offering guidance, tips, and possible follow up advice on the application/hiring process.

- Recruiters who are unable to accept resumes may still be able to offer critical information for formatting, what to include, and what to leave out of the resume. Tips on company specific application/resume submission processes are extremely valuable to job seekers.

2. Logistics:

When/Where is the Event? Event specifics/campus map are usually sent with registration confirmation. It is usually also available online.

- Whenever possible, get event details well in advance of the career fair. Parking, unloading, event locations—avoid the stress of figuring it all out the day of the fair by contacting the event coordinator ahead of time.

Booth Set-Up: Have a professional looking display. Allow for enough time to set-up your booth. Practice setting up the display. Bring shipping labels to return cases.

- Choose the appropriate size display for the space you will receive. IF the display is oversized, contact the event coordinator well in advance of the event to request a table assignment at the end of a row which typically gives you a little more space.
- Be aware that booth assignments are not always as flexible as you might think. Each school must weigh several factors in making table assignments (wheelchair access, first-come first-served policy, etc.)

3. Needs and Requests:

Meet the Career Fair Coordinator:

- Any time you need something that is not provided, the coordinator can often respond to your needs (fax machine, copies, band-aids, etc.).

Electricity/Internet Access:

- Request electricity/internet access as soon as you know you will need it for your booth. (Note: Many campuses charge a fee for this type of support.)
- While the person who completed the registration form who may not have requested electricity, you may have to pay a higher rate to have the service added the day of the event.

4. Connect:

- Be accessible.
- Smile and make eye-contact.
- Stand as much as possible.

5. Presents versus Presence:

- Use giveaways as an icebreaker. Do not let the gimmick/toy speak for you.
- Handouts: Provide handouts for various levels of interest (summer jobs, co-op, internships, full-time/post-grad employment).

6. Student Ambassadors:

- Bring a campus alumnus whenever possible. They reflect the diversity of candidates you are seeking.
- Typically alumni can make connections with students by referencing a specific course, faculty, and organization. Remember, career fairs are all about networking.

7. Work the Fair:

- Come early and stay late. Students expect to see you throughout the entire scheduled time for the event.
- Attend networking events. Meet colleagues and event staff to develop support network. This is your opportunity to ask questions.
- Distance listening: When possible, position yourself to hear what job seekers are telling other employers. Reach out to jobseekers who seem like good candidates.
- Be respectful of other recruit. Also, be courteous about standing in aisles in front of another person's booth.
- Attendance at several career fairs on campus makes your organization more familiar to students.
- Career fairs allow you to reach a lot of students all at once.
- To get the most out of your visit, consider scheduling an information session the night before the event, and also schedule interviews the day after the fair. (Note: Make these requests early as they are popular dates.)

8. Students Talk, Students Listen:

- Good news spreads fast, bad news spreads even faster. Successful recruiters are helpful recruiters.
- Keep private comments private. Do not discuss/make negative comments about previous candidates and/or competitors. Professionalism is always a plus.

9. Follow Up:

- Bring plenty of business cards—be a resource for students.
- Fill out employer evaluations. They contribute to event improvements.
- Share your hiring data with us. It helps us to help promote your employer/agency