

OPTIMIZING YOUR SUCCESS AT JOB FAIRS - 50 TIPS FOR JOB SEEKERS

Before the Job Fair

1. Take the Job Fair seriously! You're making important first impressions. Employers remember only a few of the hundreds of job seekers they meet at the Fair.
2. Check with your local Worksource Oregon Employment Department office for a listing of employers that will be participating at the Fair.
3. Research the companies that interest you. Learn who the companies are and what they do. (Check company websites if available.)
4. Be prepared to make cogent conversation and ask relevant / timely questions of employers (this will make you an interesting and memorable applicant).
5. Create a one-minute 'commercial' about yourself. It should explain: a) who you are, b) your qualifications and accomplishments, c) special skills and values that set you apart from other applicants, and d) one or two specific examples of what you could do to solve actual company problems (how you could benefit the company). Practice your 'commercial' out loud to feel comfortable. Your delivery of the commercial (confident and enthusiastic, yet natural) is perhaps more important than the content of your commercial. **YOUR OBJECTIVE IS TO SAY ONE TRULY MEMORABLE THING TO EMPLOYERS!**
6. Resumes – tailor your resume to the specific job(s) for which you are applying. If you're uncertain about the quality and content of your resume, visit your local Worksource Oregon Employment Department office for assistance. Take sufficient copies of your resume to the Job Fair. Make sure your resumes are crisp and clean. Check carefully for spelling and grammatical errors.
7. Do not force employers to accept your resumes. **Please understand that resumes are accepted solely at the discretion and choice of the individual employer. No employer is obligated to accept your resume unless choosing to do so.**
8. If there is potential for on-the-spot interviewing or hiring at the Fair, take reference letters and cover letters, and assemble a professional portfolio that contains examples of work and accomplishments.
9. Be prepared to answer questions. Review standard interview questions and formulate your responses.
10. Prepare questions to ask employers: what opportunities are available, what are the responsibilities, what skills are companies seeking in candidates?
11. Make a prioritized list of employers you would like to meet with at the Job Fair (this is your target list.)
12. Plan your strategy. First visit booths that interest you the most (when your energy is high and you're at your best). Do not wonder or roam! Present yourself with a purpose. Don't be shy – be prepared!
13. Take pens and paper.
14. Dress for success! Be well groomed. Treat the Job Fair like any job interview.
15. Set realistic expectations. Few job seekers are hired on-the-spot at Job Fairs. Be prepared to follow up on promising leads.
16. Block sufficient time in your schedule to attend the Job Fair. Make preparations to arrive on time.

At the Job Fair

17. Turn off cell phones.
18. Obtain a copy of the Job Fair layout and the employer participation list. Find the booth locations of your targeted employers.
19. Briskly (but attentively) walk through the entire Job Fair. Scope-out employers with whom you wish to speak. Observe which employers are currently busy.
20. Get a feeling for the entire Job Fair. Then take a few moments to compose yourself and to finalize your 'plan of attack'!
21. Visit your top choices first. Avoid standing in a long line to speak with one recruiter when you could talk with 3 others in the same time period.

Approach your targeted companies

22. From a distance (about 7 feet away), observe and listen to employers interacting with other applicants. Listen to what the employer is asking.
23. While waiting in line, review information about the employer you are approaching.
24. As you approach the booth, respect other people's privacy as they complete their contact with the employer.

When you meet with an employer

25. Give an award winning SMILE.
26. Greet each employer with a firm handshake. Make eye contact. Be polite.
27. Introduce yourself. Look confident.
28. Show interest. State briefly what you like about the company and why you decided to stop at their booth.
29. Remember the employer's name. Glance at a nametag. Personalize your conversation by using the employer's name.
30. Deliver your 'one-minute commercial' (that you developed in step 5 above.) Be sensitive to the timing and situation before using your 'commercial' – adapt it as the circumstance dictates.
31. Listen carefully to what the employer says. The room may be noisy and busy, but don't be distracted. Focus, focus, focus!
32. Ask questions (the questions you prepared in step 10 above).
33. Answer questions directly, politely, and concisely. REMEMBER THE GOAL IS TO BE ASKED BACK FOR AN 'IN-HOUSE' INTERVIEW.
34. Ask about the application procedure and hiring process. What is the timeframe? Is there a convenient time to call to follow up?
35. Do NOT ask questions about salary and benefits. These questions are more appropriate at final interviews.
36. Request a business card or obtain a contact name, phone number, fax, and email address. Take brochures or informational materials that are available at the booth.
37. Don't let promotional 'freebies' on the table distract you and do not grab at them.
38. Thank each employer for their time.
39. If you are given an application form, take time to fill it out neatly and completely. Remember the way you fill out the application is in itself an example of your work. Do not write "See Resume" to save time.
40. Conduct yourself professionally at all times. You are 'on stage' even as you stand in line or move about the Fair area.
41. Stay fresh! Job Fairs can be exhausting. If you start to get tired, take a break.
42. Network with other job seekers at the Fair. Share leads, resources, and ideas.
43. Keep a list of the employers you meet. Make notes about the company and your conversation with each representative.
44. Understand that not all companies will have open positions or be interviewing on the spot. Be prepared to gather information and make connections with employers for possible future openings. Do not express frustration about lack of immediate openings.

After the Job Fair

45. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done!
46. Review your notes from the Job Fair. Evaluate what you think went well and what you can improve upon for the next Job Fair or interview.
47. Write personalized thank-you letters to companies that interest you. Cite something specific from your discussion. Try to send letters out within two days after the Job Fair. It's okay to enclose a resume with your thank-you letter. This may draw attention to your name once again.
48. Continue to research the companies that interest you. Treat the Job Fair as an initial contact, not the last.
49. Keep accurate records of your contacts, including dates of your letters or telephone calls, and copies of all application materials that you send.

Final Tip

50. Focus on learning as much as you can about what employers are looking for in the people they hire. The primary benefit of participation in the Fair is to collect information and make contacts.