

HOW TO STAND OUT AT A CAREER FAIR



Summary: *A career fair does not have to be an intimidating experience if you prepare an elevator pitch beforehand and bring several copies of your resume.*

Attending career fairs can make a great first impression on companies you are interested in if you can stand out from the mob of other candidates. **Preparation is key** to making sure you will be remembered and desired by potential employers.

While you might not like the idea, **creating an elevator pitch** is necessary because you have limited time and attention to make an impression. An effective pitch should include your name, what you are studying, background, interests, and a tidbit about the company to show that did your research. Deliver your pitch with authority and confidence.

Bring several copies of your resume. If you know what companies will be at the fair in advance, you can tailor some copies of your resume to those specific companies. You should still bring some generic copies to give to companies you don't know about.

Make your conversations meaningful yet short. A drawn-out and pointless conversation will be remembered as such. Try to highlight one experience or other point of interest that the employer can remember. If you are nervous, try talking to a few companies that you are less interested in first to warm up for the big pitch to your targeted company.

Don't walk away without getting a business card. That card represents the next step in the hiring process. Send a quick email after the fair to check up, restate your interest with the company and thank them. Jog their memory by bringing up something you talked about at the fair.

Show how valuable you will be to them by giving something to them first. The day after the career fair, send an email with an article you read that pertains to the company. Perhaps the company just started a blog, so the article you send to them could be about the importance of growing content marketing in the industry. State that you found it interesting and that you thought they might too.

Employers are at career fairs to find new talent, not to judge you. Your goal is to be the talent they are searching for. Attend as many career fairs as you can, but don't visit the same company every time. If you haven't be hired by them yet, nothing will change until you do something to make your resume better.

Photo: career.gatech.edu