

8 TIPS TO HELP YOU PREPARE FOR A CAREER FAIR IN THE NEW YEAR



Summary: Make the most of career fairs by going in prepared and ready to make a good first impression.

While the job market has been improving over the past several years, career fairs are still valuable opportunities to further your chances of getting in the door of a new company. The impression and connections that can be made during a career fair may not result in an immediate job but can come in handy later. With the New Year here, take the time to prepare yourself and your resume so that you are ready when career fairs take place throughout the year.

Colleges regularly hold career fairs for their future graduates to increase their chances of landing a job immediately upon graduation. The school's will have better ratings if their graduates secure employment quickly. Communities also routinely have career fairs in order to connect those in their community with employers.

These eight tips can help you prepare for a career fair:

1. Dress for success

A career fair is like an interview so treat it as such. Be well-groomed and dressed in professional attire. Men should have on a pressed button-down shirt with ironed dress pants or a suit. Stick with neutral colors like navy, gray or black. The shirt should be white or light blue. Be sure to shave. Women should select dress pants or a skirt that goes below the knees. Pair the bottoms with a tailored shirt, blouse and/or knit sweater that is appropriate for a business casual atmosphere.

2. Do some homework

If possible, find out which businesses will be present at the career fair then research them. Find out what the companies are involved in and any interesting facts about them that would be beneficial to bring up when talking with the company reps.

3. Bring your resume

Showing up to a career fair without multiple copies of your resume is a waste of time. Your resume needs to be flawless, free of errors and updated with your most recent experience. Put them in a folder or briefcase to prevent your copies from getting creased or wrinkled.

4. Prepare an elevator pitch

Elevator pitches allow you to give as much relevant information in a short amount of time to the employer or relevant person. You want to deliver a summary about yourself that provides information on your education, experience, and skills relevant to the industry in an interesting manner.

5. Collect Cards

Be sure to collect a business card from each company rep that you talk with. This will make it easier to follow up after the career fair.

6. Spend time wisely

Don't waste time at just one spot. Move around so that you are able to meet with several companies but maintain meaningful conversations with each one.

7. Don't smoke

Avoid smoking or chewing tobacco before the career fair. If you absolutely must, be sure to brush your teeth, swish mouthwash around, and chew minty gum to eliminate any trace of the smell on your breath.

8. Fight off hunger

It will be hard to make a good impression if your mind and body are only thinking of food. Don't go without eating before the career fair but don't go and stuff yourself with so much food that you are uncomfortable either. Eat a meal that will fill you up and give you strong brain power so that you can think on your feet.

After the career fair, follow up with the companies you met with. Send a card, email, or make a phone call to the person you talked with.

Have you ever been to a career fair before? Tell us about your experience, in the comments below.

To learn more about how to follow up, read these articles:

- [Five Rules for Following Up After a Job Interview](#)
- [Top 3 Job Interview Follow Up Tips](#)
- [How to Follow-Up after Interviews](#)

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