

How to Attend a Job Fair

Career Services

Whether it's an internship or future employment you're looking for, you'll get the results you want from attending a Job Fair. Job Fairs bring many employers who are looking for future employees under one roof. You'll have opportunities to talk face-to-face with employers you are interested in regarding opportunities in Minnesota and throughout the United States. Make plans to attend a Job Fair. Stop in at SMSU Career Services Center in Bellows Academic, Rom 156, for upcoming Job Fair events.

The key to your success is PREPARATION. Employers want employees who show confidence, are energetic and interested in their company. You'll be more confident when you are prepared. This handout will help you get prepared. Learn what to do before, during, and after the Job Fair. Just follow these three simple steps.

STEP 1: BEFORE THE JOB FAIR

Decide on a Focus. What do you want to get out of the Job Fair experience? Do you want to:

- Interview for a position or an internship?
- Gather information on careers or majors?
- Gain contacts at companies for future networking?
- Obtain employment?
- Other?

Be prepared. The single most important aspect of going to a Job Fair is to make sure that you are prepared. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- **Register early** for the Job Fair. See Career Services for more information on registration.
- **Research the companies** that are participating at the Job Fair and what positions they have to offer. You'll find information at Career Services, the Library, or by using the Internet.
- Prepare a one-minute introduction. Think about your strong points, your goals, the company and where you want to go within the company. Make sure you practice this introduction to ensure that you make an excellent first impression.
- **Develop a response to questions** the employers might ask you. Practice the questions in front of a mirror, with friends, or in a mock interview with a SSU Career Counselor. [Sample lists are available in Career Services.](#)
- **Develop two or three questions** that you would like to ask the employer. This shows that you have a genuine interest in that company.

- **Prioritize and make a game plan** of what companies you want to talk to and when. Actually make a list of #1, #2, #3, etc.
- **Women should dress** in a professional looking suit, dress, or pantsuit. Men should wear a suit or jacket and dress slacks, and a shirt and tie.
- **Wear polished, but comfortable shoes.** You may be on your feet all day, so it is important to have comfortable shoes. These shoes should also be formal and new, if possible.
- **Limit jewelry** to one set of earrings, one ring on each hand and cover up any tattoos. Remember what impression you're trying to make.

What to bring along to a Job Fair? Good preparation means that you are ready for whatever happens during the interview or conversation with an employer. Bring the following items with you to the Job Fair. Keep in mind that resumes, references and pens should be carried in a professional portfolio or folder.

- **Resumes.** Anywhere from 20 to 60 or more should be brought with you. Make sure that the resumes are free from error and laser printed on resume quality paper. Bring enough along so that you do not run out. Talk with a Career Counselor at Career Services for assistance with your resume.
- **List of References.** Employers may ask for your references during the interview. Bring a good supply of this list. Job Seekers should have three to five professional references on their reference list. This list should be laser printed on paper that matches your resume. Examples can be seen at Career Services.
- **A Briefcase, Professional Binder or Bag.** Employers at the Job Fair will have employer information and handouts to offer. A bag of some sort will allow you to store these materials, thus making the day easier for you.

STEP 2: DURING THE JOB FAIR

Making A Good Impression. This is a very serious part of the job search process. Dress as you would for a formal interview. Take the following into consideration before arriving at the Job Fair:

- **Approach the employer's table by yourself, not with friends.**
- **Use a firm handshake.** Be enthusiastic. Exercise good eye contact and SMILE!
- **Address the employer** as Mr., Ms., or Dr. Check the representative nametag for clues.
- **Demonstrate your knowledge** of the employer and field of interest. Research the company before the

fair. Be prepared to ask questions that you show you know something about the company.

- **Know yourself and your resume.** Know your skills, experiences, and interests and be able to communicate with them. Relate these specific qualities to the needs of the employer. Be prepared to discuss and provide examples of your leadership roles or volunteer experiences.
- **Be responsive** to the questions of your experiences whenever possible.
- **Be polite to everyone at the Job Fair.**

STEP 3: AFTER THE JOB FAIR

Impress employers by following up your visit. Yes, following up is an important step in the job search process! Many people forget about this step, but it can make a difference between the employer selecting you or another candidate. It shows the employer that you're interested in them, and it gets the employer thinking about you again. Suggestions to help you to do follow up work:

- **Make notes** about employers you visited with and be sure to get the names and addresses of the company representatives you talked with.
- **Keep notes** on the employer's timeline in regard to filling the position. When do they expect to start the next round of interviews or when do they think they will decide on the position?
- **Send thank you letters** to all employers within three days, if possible. You might want to include a copy of your resume. This is a good method to provide employers with additional exposure to your name and background.
- Evaluate your experience at the Job Fair. What went well? What did not go well? What did you learn? What will you do differently next time?

JOB FAIR TIPS

1. **Walk around the Convention Center** to get a feel for the set-up and then carefully chart your own course. A map of the floor plan give the location of each company is available at the door.
2. Don't just visit with employers that have expressed positions of interest to you. **Talk with companies where you would like to work.** Your contact today might pay off in the future.
3. **Go alone.** Friends may keep you from visiting employers that are of primary interest to you.
4. **Don't be shy!** Be assertive and show initiative-shake hands and introduce yourself to recruiters when you reach their booth. Speak up! Make eye contact with the representatives. If you discover you have chosen the wrong company, thank them and move on.
5. **Listen attentively.** Gather information. Learn as much as you can about the various opportunities available. Pick up company brochures and job descriptions.

6. **Be enthusiastic** – according to an employer survey, the single most important personal attribute students can bring to their first regular employment position is enthusiasm. So smile and project interest in the company.
7. There may be applicants approaching employers at the same time as you. Don't be overwhelmed by the experience. Keep a positive attitude and concentrate on the benefits of the experience.
8. **Explore options** – A wide variety of companies will participate at this Fair. This is an excellent opportunity to browse and indulge your curiosity.
9. **Avoid questions** about salary and benefits.
10. **Pick up a business card at each booth.** A brief note on the back of each card will help you recall your conversation with the company's representative. Help yourself to the free company literature.
11. Remember this is not an interview. It is, however, your opportunity to make a crucial first impression.
12. Be prepared to discuss where you want to work geographically, what you like doing, and what you're looking for in a job and your most relevant skills.
13. **Network.** While you are waiting in line, talk to others. You may hear about opportunities of which you were unaware.
14. Send a thank-you note to company representatives you were excited about

ABOUT CAREER SERVICES

Let SMSU Career Services Center help you be successful in your job search. Stop in or today!

Get help putting together your job search tools including a resume, cover letter, reference list, portfolio and more. Practice your interviewing skills by doing a mock interview. You can stop in and make an appointment to see a Career Counselor. Walk-ins are also welcome. Services available at Career Services include:

- Write a dynamic resume that gets noticed.
- Practice interviewing skills with a Career Counselor.
- Handouts on successful interviewing.
- Cover letters that are effective.
- Gather information on companies.
- Set up a Job Search Plan and Strategy.
- Look at Career Planning and the Job Market.
- Dress to Impress Tips.
- Put together a Portfolio.
- Hot jobs, great careers and salaries.
- Sign up for workshops.
- Get your questions answered, and much more

Career Services

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Visit our Website:

www.southwestmsu.edu/CampusLife/CareerServices

