

Suit Up! How to Work a Career Expo (like a pro!)

Preparation is the key to making a successful presentation at any job or career fair. To make the most out of a career expo, we recommend the following:

Prior to the Event (PREPARE)

1. **Prepare a “one minute commercial.”** To explain who you are, why you’re interested in their company, describe your qualifications and strong points, your goals, and where you want to go within the company. Be prepared to talk about these aspects with recruitment representatives.
2. **Be prepared to discuss your career goals.** Be ready to talk about where you want to work, what you would like to do, and your relevant skills.
3. **Bring Resumes**—Bring a big supply of resumes to hand out to companies and also take a portfolio or a briefcase, something to hold resumes and carry corporate literature. Other items that support your interests and abilities such as references, written work or a portfolio can also be helpful.
4. **Understand how your skills** (or the ones that you want to develop) relate to the employment opportunities available.
5. **Thoroughly research** your “core” companies and gain background information upon which you can base your conversations with the company representatives. Check your school’s library, career center and company web pages for information that you’ll need to prepare for the event.

Day of the Event

1. **Dress Professionally.** Job fairs are like interviews, so make sure your attire is interview appropriate. Wear professional clothes, style your hair conservatively, and ladies should wear minimal makeup. You want to present the best image possible—jeans, sweatshirts, and backpack won’t cut it. Avoid excessive jewelry and perfume. You will only have a few minutes to make an impression as a job candidate. Positive first impressions are critical.
2. **Arrive early** and map out your strategy. Who will you talk with first? Lines will be longer for some employers than they will be for others. Plan accordingly and don’t waste valuable time by standing in line.
3. **Network.** While you are waiting in line, talk to others. You may hear about opportunities of which you were unaware. Keep an open mind and don’t reduce your opportunities due to lack of information or effort. You may want to tour the event and make contact with all the participating organizations to learn more about them and what they have to offer, but visit your “core” companies first.
4. **Introduce yourself** to company representatives in a positive and confident manner; offer a firm handshake. Include your name, degree, major, and the year you are graduating.
5. **Tell the recruiter about your job interests.** For example:
 - a. Discussing a particular career or job with that organization
 - b. Learning more about the organization and available opportunities
 - c. Learning more about what someone does in a particular career
 - d. Discussing internship or summer job opportunities
6. **Present your résumé** and be ready to discuss your background, qualifications and career goals. Ask what you should do to apply for a position with them.
7. **Think of questions that you have regarding your area(s) of interest.** Take notes on the answers you receive. Some questions might be:
 - a. What are common career paths with your organization?
 - b. What is the training program for new hires?
 - c. What do you look for in a candidate?
8. **Make sure you obtain each representative’s name, title, address, and phone number** so you can follow up with them. Collect literature and business cards whenever possible and ask the representatives when you can expect to hear back from them.
9. **Wear comfortable shoes** because lines are frequently long and you should expect to wait, don’t wear uncomfortable high heels or brand new shoes that haven’t been broken in. Consider a pair of conservative, interview appropriate shoes that you know are comfortable.