

How to prepare for a Career Fair



JACOBS
UNIVERSITY



Contents

- I** What is a Career Fair?
- II** How to prepare yourself
- III** How to perform at your best
- IV** Follow up

I. What is a Career Fair



JACOBS
UNIVERSITY



Why Companies Go

- 1) **Attracting skilled applicants**
- 2) **The public image**
 - Recognition
 - Competition
 - Obligation

Differences between larger and smaller companies!



**So, why you
should go?**





Who you will meet

Marketing Staff	Young Employees	HR Staff	Managers
Usually at the Stall	Usually at the Stall	Interviews, networking events, at the stall	Talks / presentations, networking events
Provide Information	Provide real insight	Can place your resume favorably	Have the power to hire you
Advice: May refer very good applicants	Advice: Do not behave casually	Advice: Potentially have hiring power	Advice: Approach them after talks

Settings



Stalls

- Information about jobs, possibilities, hiring criteria
- Opportunity to make a strong personal impression



Talks and Presentations

- Learn directly about trends / possibilities
- Network after the talk!



Interviews

- Some career fairs allow you to schedule real interviews
- Only possibility to get hired straight away at a fair



Networking Events

- Lunches, career fair parties (after event)
- Informal, highly efficient networking

II. Preparing Yourself



JACOBS
UNIVERSITY



The Classic Job Fair Mistakes

1. **Going unprepared:** „What can you tell me about your company?“
2. **Self-Interest:** „I’m graduating soon, what can you do for me?“
3. **Passivity:** „No, I don’t have any questions, I would just like to leave my CV with you“
4. **Failure to follow-up:** „I thought it went so well. But why are they not calling me??“



Prepare: Look competent & credible

- **Learn as much as possible about the companies present**
 - _What are they looking for?
 - _Research vision, mission, work philosophy
 - _Learn everything about past, current and future projects.
- **Preparation makes you an interesting candidate**
 - _Allows you to match the company's requirement
 - _Allows you to ask smart questions and to set you apart



How to find information

Website

Publications

Employer Directories

Job Postings



Think about your own objectives

→ Identify

_your preferences & career goals

_your professional / personal skills (think of concrete examples to substantiate skills)

→ Shows that you are

_capable of realistic self-reflection

_determined, and likely successful



Preparing your “Marketing Materials”

→Your Elevator Pitch (self-presentation)

Brief, effective 30 second self introduction

→Your Career Fair Resume

Short one-page resume, ideally several versions for different types of employers

→Your Cover Letter

If you are interested in a special employer, consider bringing a targeted cover letter

→Your Smile File (file with achievements, transcripts etc.)

Be prepared to show a folder with your transcripts, references to a company representatives (keep the file with you, do not hand your smile file representatives)



Stand out with Smart Questions

- _Be thoughtful, and listen well
- _Show what you know, and ask for more
- _Keep the focus on the job and the company
- _Refrain from asking questions about salary or benefits



Example Questions

Marketing Staff

- I read about **xyz project** on your website. Is your department involved in it?
- What are the **career paths** for new hires over the first few years?
- What do you look for in candidates? What **graduate degree**?
- Would I **travel** a lot, would I participate in overseas projects?

Recently Hired

- What **particular skills** do you use most in your job?
- **What do you like** about working for your organization?
- What possibilities for **further development** are provided?
- Who should I **contact**?



Dressing up for a Career Fair

- _Business outfit (no tie needed)
- _Comfortable
- _Clean, polished, ironed
- _NO brights / distracting accessories
- _NO or mild perfume
- _Leave luggage on the bus
- _Only wear jacket after you arrive
- _Bring: Organizer, schedule, pen/paper, CVs

III. How to perform at your best



JACOBS
UNIVERSITY



The Importance of Body Language

_The first impression counts

_Our body language decides over whether

➤ we are **liked / disliked**

➤ perceived as **capable**



First Impression: How to make a great one

- _Wait respectfully, talk to other job seekers
- _Don't be afraid to walk right up and launch into your pitch
- _Firm handshakes
- _Maintain good eye contact, and smile
- _Try to remain calm and collected
- _Beware: Although friendly, remain professional
- _Wait for the right moment to hand over your CV



Interview on Spot

If a company rep takes an interest in you and begins to ask you questions, treat it like a proper job interview



Making a Strategic Exit

_Prepare a follow-up

Thank everyone!

Confirm names, ask for business card

Reinforce desire to work for them

_Questions

Next steps

Contact person

_Immediately after each stall

Make notes (information/contacts)



General Tips

- 1) **Plan a route:** The most important company third
- 2) **End:** Stop by stall right before the job fair ends
- 3) **Have an open mind:** chat with idle company reps
- 4) **Talk to other job seekers:** Valuable networking contacts

IV. Follow-UP



JACOBS
UNIVERSITY



First Steps: Get Organized!

- 1) Don't lose the overview
- 2) Keep a spreadsheet, a journal or a folder
- 3) Review networking contacts established (e.g. Business cards of recruiters and other individuals)
- 4) Organize thoughts/notes on the meeting
- 5) Keep Info on the material you left with them (CV etc)
- 6) Keep track of your follow up



Evaluate your Experience

_Did you like the company representatives / the atmosphere?

_Did you like the jobs that they outlined for you?

_Did you like the way they answered your questions?

_Can you see yourself working for the company?



Using the info you have collected

_ Useful to determine what the employer is looking for

_ Become a better applicant (targeted application)

_ Networking: Use the contacts you have collected

Use their names

Apply to them

Make them submit your application for you



How to follow-up

Why?

Confirms your interest, special motivation
Distinguishes you from competitors

When?

Next 48 hours

What?

Thank you-email confirming your interest
Cover letter, updated résumé, transcript, references

Follow-up to the follow-up: Call back 14 days later

Thank you for your attention!



**JACOBS
UNIVERSITY**