

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER FAIR

BEFORE THE CAREER FAIR — *Plan Ahead!*

- Identify and create a target list of companies to speak with based on your career goals. Prioritize the list by level of interest:
 - A = strong interest, definitely visit
 - B = some interest, will probably visit
 - C = visit if there is time
- Research the “A” and “B” companies. Use Wetfeet, Vault, Hoovers, and the company website to learn more about the company. Use HireSmith to see the types of jobs they have posted.
- Prepare and practice your 60 second commercial (see below).
- Have your resume reviewed and refined and bring plenty of copies to share with employers.
- Plan your outfit. Be sure to follow guidelines for business professional attire.

DURING THE CAREER FAIR — *Make the Most of Your Time!*

- Schedule enough time at the fair so you are able to talk with all of your target companies.
- Review the floor plan to identify where your target companies are located. Determine a plan of action.
- Approach one of your “B” or “C” companies first to practice speaking to employers prior to approaching your “A” companies.
- Manage your time wisely. If there is a long line at one table, move on to the next and return later.
- First impressions count! Use a firm handshake, make eye contact, and speak confidently.
- Introduce yourself using your 60-second commercial and start asking questions.
- Ask for a business card at the end of the conversation so you can follow up. Use the student lounge to take or review notes.

AFTER THE CAREER FAIR — *Follow Up!*

- Take notes about the companies you visited and the people with whom you spoke. Think about what worked well when talking to employers and where you could improve.
- Send a thank you note to all of your target companies’ representatives right away. Try to mention something specific about the conversation you had.
- Follow companies that caught your interest. Find out when they are visiting campus, frequently check postings, and keep up on latest company news.

Your 60-Second Commercial

The 60-second commercial or “elevator speech” is your introduction to someone at a professional networking event such as a career fair. Here’s what you should cover in those 60 seconds:

- Who you are (name, year, major)
- What you’re searching for
- Career interests or relevant work experience
- Why you’re interested in their company
- A leading question about the company or position

Example:

“Hi. My name is Carrie Jones. I’m a senior marketing major at Smith and am currently looking for a full-time position. I was happy to hear that Macy’s was going to be here today because I’m very interested in your retail management program. I know you’re looking for strong leaders. I have a wealth of leadership experiences that I can bring to the table. As Vice President of Recruitment for my sorority, I was able to increase membership by 200% in two years, and I’ve developed many skills transferable to a professional setting. Can you tell me a little more about the retail management program?”