



REASONS TO ATTEND CAREER EXPO _____

Regardless of major, academic year or future goals, here are a few benefits of attending Career Expo:

- Increase your chances of receiving an interview with an employer.
- Expand your network of contacts.
- Investigate positions, occupations and career fields you could pursue with your major and background.
- Learn more about employers/available positions.
- Receive sound job search advice from seasoned company recruiters.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT CAREER EXPO _____

Having realistic expectations of Career Expo is important in succeeding in your career search. This is a list of common career fair expectations:

- Employers expect you to be prepared (dress professionally, ask thoughtful questions, have a polished resume, etc.).
- Employers expect to interact with students seeking employment as well as those simply researching careers and employers.
- Most recruiters are not authorized to hire candidates on the day of the fair. With this in mind, your goal should be to land an interview—not a job offer.
- Employers' goals are to be exposed to as many job candidates as possible; therefore, you will have a relatively short amount of time to sell yourself and make a positive impact on the employer.

Attending Career Expo for the first time can be a little overwhelming. However, if you prepare, you will get as much out of the event as you put into it.

BEFORE CAREER EXPO _____

Simply attending Career Expo is not enough; make your participation count by preparing purposefully!

Target Your Top Companies/Organizations. A list of companies/organizations who will be attending and a map detailing their location is available at www.auburn.edu/career. Take this list and plan your strategy for which companies you would like to visit. Research the organizations in which you are most interested. Then, **print the floor plans** so you know where you are going upon arrival.

Prepare a Resume that is well-written and error free! Make sure you have multiple copies of both your resume and list of references on hand.

Register with JobCentral at www.jobs.auburn.edu so that you may sign-up for any on-campus interviews that may result from Career Expo.

Create a List of Questions you want to ask employers.

Prepare to Answer Questions because employers will be asking them! You will be expected to think on your feet, so be prepared to answer their questions.

Learn to Sell Yourself by creating a 60 second **elevator speech**, and make sure you practice it! Your speech should include the following:

1. **Introduction:** Introduce yourself, offer a firm hand shake and a resume.
2. **Objective:** Tell the employer why you are there and what sort of employment you seek.
3. **Summary:** Briefly summarize education, experience, strengths, etc.
4. **Closing:** Reiterate your interest and thank the employer.

Here are some topics you might cover in an elevator speech:

- Who am I? What do I offer? What field or industry am I in? (Identify yourself in terms of a job function or contribution.)
- What need or issue does the employer face and what problem can be solved?
- What are the main contributions I can make? What is my USP (Unique Selling Proposition)? What benefits can employers derive from my skills, based on my proven accomplishments?
- End with a question to invoke further conversation; What do you think about...? How can I get a spot on your interview schedule? Can we set a phone appointment to discuss the issue of...? Can I send you my resume?

Then determine how effective and memorable the Elevator Speech is by using this checklist:

- I can state who I am, what my work is and what makes me unique in 60 seconds.
- In my 60 seconds I say my name and my school and concentration of interest.
- My 60 seconds has multiple parts that can stand on their own and invite conversation by the listener. I communicate how I do what I do differently, uniquely or unlike my competitors.

- I have a slogan or tag line or memory hook.
- I have a 30 second version of my 60 seconds that communicates the same information.
- The response I get from either version leads into further conversation. For instance, "Interesting; how do you do that?"

Resource: Email, August 13, 2008, Val Matta, VP Business Development, CareerShift, LLC

Up Your Personal Appearance. At least a week before Career Expo, get a haircut and make sure your suit is appropriate, fits, is cleaned.

Arrive Early to avoid long lines and catch all employers as some will leave before the career fair has ended. As you arrive, be polite to people in the parking lot, elevator, hallway or restroom as it may be a recruiter.

In Summary

- Prioritize employers with whom you would like to speak.
- Identify the information you hope to obtain.
- Identify personal strengths you would like to convey.
- Specify those goals you hope to achieve by attending the career fair.

DURING CAREER EXPO

Bring your student ID to expedite the check-in process.

Be Confident, display enthusiasm, confidence, sincerity and the ability to communicate clearly. Smile; walk with good posture, and make consistent and direct eye contact. To further exhibit confidence and individuality, visit employers' tables on your own.

Chart Your Course and survey the room to determine where employers are located and in what order you plan to visit them. (Printing out the map ahead of time helps with this.) If possible, avoid standing in long lines. If there is a long line to speak with a representative, keep moving and return later.

Introduce Yourself when it's your turn to meet the employer. Take a deep breath, smile, shake hands firmly and begin your "elevator speech." Make direct eye contact with the employer throughout your conversation, and watch your tempo and tone. Avoid speaking too quickly and/or too loudly or softly.

Ask Meaningful Questions

- Ask one or two meaningful questions without monopolizing the employer's time.
- Do not ask about salary at this time.
- If you are an undergraduate, ask about internship, co-op, summer job and scholarship opportunities.

Prepare to Follow-Up

At the end of your conversation, do the following:

- Thank the employer for his/her time.
- Leave a copy of your resume.
- Ask the employer for a business card, company literature and protocol for follow-up.

- If the employer says they do not have a position in your field, ask for the address of the Personnel Office. Nearly all employers hire all majors.

As soon as you walk away from the employer, jot down a few notes about your conversation. You may want to include a few memorable discussion points in your follow-up letter.

AFTER CAREER EXPO

Give Yourself the Competitive Edge and don't make the mistake of thinking that as soon as you have spoken to the last employer and left the facility that you are finished. Follow-up is essential!

Mail Thank You Letters to employers within one week of the event and send a thank you email that evening. Most candidates do not send thank you letters. Give yourself the competitive edge!

Be Persistent and observe follow-up procedures suggested by the employer. Once you have complied with these procedures, and a reasonable amount of time has passed since you heard from the employer, it is okay to send an email or call to inquire about the status of your application.

Use the Career Development Services Handbook. It is an excellent resource and available for free in 303 Martin Hall and on-line at www.auburn.edu/career.

SUMMARY

You have made the most of your Career Expo experience when it results in subsequent interviews. If you have followed the "before," "during," and "after" steps, you are probably on your way to landing one or more interviews—and better yet—a career!

Statistics from career fairs indicate that 49 percent of candidates receive interviews from job fairs, 65 percent of those eventually receive offers. This process may take three to four months (or longer). Again, the larger the company, the longer this may take.

CAREER EXPO CHECKLIST

- Portfolio/Briefcase (Women should either carry a briefcase or handbag, never both.)
- Pen and Notebook
- At least a dozen resumes
- Copies of your unofficial transcript
- Copies of list of references
- Appropriate clothing including comfortable, professional shoes
- Small breath mints—no gum!
- A positive attitude

Resources: "Keys to a Successful Career Fair." Clemson University Career Expo Handbook. 2000.

Reuter-Alm, G. "Three Ps for Succeeding at the Job Fair." Career Development Associate, Eastern Michigan University