

Career Fair Success

The purpose of a career fair is to provide students the opportunity to network with employers. The chances that you will receive a job offer during the event are slim. However, if you properly prepare beforehand and have thorough follow-up afterwards, the chances of receiving a job offer become greater.

You do not have to be actively seeking a job or internship to attend a career fair. It is just as important for you to go to start networking with employers, to learn about the careers that are available to college students and new graduates, or to just get comfortable with the flow of these events. No matter what your purpose for attending, the basic steps outlined in this document are important to follow so that you will feel confident and come across as a competent student.

Before, During, & After	Instructions	Examples
<p>Before the Career Fair</p>	<p>Research the Companies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Services will publish a list of companies that are registered to attend the career fair. It is important to research the company websites, their open positions, and any recent news about the company. Follow the company on LinkedIn and research any USCB alumni that may work there. Connect with the recruiter through LinkedIn before the career fair and research their background as highlighted on their LinkedIn profile. <p>Create a Resume</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you do not already have a resume, pick up the resume guide and use the information in it to prepare your first draft. After you have the draft, contact career services or the writing center to have someone look it over to make sure you didn't make any mistakes. If you already have a resume, pick up a resume guide anyway. You may find that yours could be stronger by following some of the tips given in it. After you have edited your resume, contact career services or the writing center to have it reviewed for further improvements. <p>Practice Introducing Yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you walk up to an employer, you will want to confidently introduce yourself. Always smile and extend your hand for a handshake when you walk up to the employer. Follow the initial first impression by giving the employer your name, your major, and why you are interested in their organization. Consider offering your Clifton Strengths as part of your introduction. If you don't know the organization, but it looks interesting, tell the employer who you are and be honest that you had not initially intended to visit their table, but upon seeing their display, you'd like to know more. That should open the conversation on a positive note. <p>Practice Small Talk and Answering Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After you introduce yourself, be sure to give the employer time to introduce themselves. Listen with your eyes and ears. Make eye contact to show your genuine interest. Employers may ask you some basic questions. Look at the examples to the right and think about how you would answer them. Pick up an Interview Guide to get more information about how to answer interview questions. <p>Practice Closing a Conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The employer may ask if you have questions when they are winding down the conversation. Always have questions to ask! See the examples for some ideas. Never ask about the salary or benefits during this brief time with the employer. Ask more general questions. Be positive as you exit. Leave with a handshake and tell the employer you will be in touch. <p>Decide What to Wear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be prepared to show up in formal interview attire. There is an insert which shows you what would be appropriate to wear. If you don't own this type of clothing, contact the Career Center to ask to use the Career Closet clothes. 	<p>Sample Introduction</p> <p>"Hello. My name is Sandra Shark and I'm a public health major. I am interested in finding out about career options in your organization that someone with my degree should consider."</p> <p>Questions that Employers Ask</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell me about yourself. (This question may be asked to probe deeper into who you are if it is asked after your introduction.) Tell me what you ideally want to do when you graduate. Why is that? (Be sure to answer all questions with complete sentences.) What do you know about our company? (You should research the companies whose tables you plan to visit.) What experience do you have in this industry/line of work? (If you don't have any direct experience, you should know what skills you have that would be of interest. This is an excellent time to talk about your Strengths*.) <p>Questions to Ask an Employer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you describe the ideal candidate for this position? Can you tell me what you like the most about your company? What challenges is this industry facing right now? When do you plan to hire entry level candidates or interns to fill your employment needs? What are the next steps for me to apply to one of these positions?
<p>During the Career Fair</p>	<p>Be Organized</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have several copies of your resume with you to hand out to employers. Keep them in a folder so that they stay clean. Use a padfolio with a notepad to take notes after each conversation you have with an employer. <p>Plan Your Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide what companies you want to meet. Walk around the fair to determine where the tables are and how crowded or uncrowded with students each one is. Consider talking to an employer you have no interest in just to practice and calm your nerves. <p>Ask for Business Cards and Take Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask each employer for a business card so that you can retain their contact information. Follow up with each company that you meet. 	
<p>After the Career Fair</p>	<p>Review and Organize Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You should have taken notes after you met your employers. Reread them and reorganize them on a spreadsheet Keep records of the thank-you letters you send out. <p>Write a Thank-you Letter & Stay in Touch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write each employer a personalized thank-you and either send it by email or regular mail. A handwritten note may make you stand out. The note can be brief, but it should also be sincere and state something you learned during your conversation. 	<p>A sample thank-you letter is included in this packet.</p> <p>Resources Consulted: Turn a Job Fair Into a Job Offer</p>

October 5, 2022

123 University Blvd.
Bluffton, SC 29909
Tom Smith

Talen Acquisition Manager
XYZ Corporation
456 Fording Island Rd.
Bluffton, SC 29910

Dear Tom Smith:

I enjoyed our conversation today at the USCB Career Fair. I have already submitted my online application for the marketing position. My strength as a writer combined with my ability to inspire others will enable me to contribute early even though I am an upcoming college graduate.

I was impressed with the training program XYZ Corporations offers to new hires. I believe it is important to understand not just the details of a new job but also the company culture. The company culture you described which allows for creativity and innovation, seems ideal to my work style.

I look forward to continuing our conversation so that I may share more of my background and how it will be useful to the entry-level position you have open. Please feel free to call or email me at your convenience. My number is 843-208-1234 and my email is sshark@uscb.edu

Sincerely,

Sandra Shark

Sandra Shark

Resources Consulted: The Job Hunting Handbook by Harry Dahlstrom

What to Wear to a Career Fair

It is best to dress in business formal attire when attending a career fair. If you are invited to an interview, follow this guide for how to dress as well. An example of someone not wearing a tie is not business formal, but it is an acceptable business casual or gender neutral option.



Need something to wear to an interview, but your budget

Use the USCB Career Closet!

Contact Career Services to find out more by emailing AR60@uscb.edu.