

Preparing for Career Fairs

BEFORE THE CAREER EXPO

- Complete your resume and have it reviewed at least once. Be sure to print your resume on resume stock paper and to double check for spelling and grammar errors. Have several copies available to give to employers.
- Research the companies and schools/departments which might be of interest to you
- Be prepared to ask intelligent questions. Make a list of questions to ask employers.
- Identify specific experiences where you have demonstrated your strengths.
- Know why you are interested in working for a company. If you don't know, they won't either.

PRACTICING YOUR ONE-MINUTE COMMERCIAL

A one-minute commercial is a great way to respond to “Tell me about yourself” or to introduce yourself at a career fair. This allows you to demonstrate confidence, knowledge, interest and enthusiasm while outlining:

- Your degree and when you're graduating
- What you've been involved in that relates to the position
- Why you're qualified
- Your projected career path and how this position fits
- Why you're seeking a position at their company (Show you've done your research!)

QUESTIONS FOR COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES

1. How many people does your company employ?
2. What goals does your company have for the next 20 years?
3. What kind of entry-level positions exist in your company?
4. How long does the hiring process take?
5. What characteristics does your organization consider to be important in an employee?
6. Are graduate degrees important? If so, in what areas?
7. What personality traits are important for success in your company?
8. What personality traits are important for success in your company?
9. As an entry-level employee, what can I expect to be doing two, five, 10 years from now?
10. What made you choose this company?
11. How long have you been with this company?
12. What has your organization accomplished which you are especially proud of?
13. How long does an entry-level employee typically stay with the company?
14. What percent of applicants are eventually hired?
15. What is the retention rate in the company?
16. Do you expect employees to relocate?

DURING THE CAREER EXPO

- Make a good first impression! Introduce yourself and establish rapport with the representatives.
- Dress appropriately. Although you are not required to wear a suit, jeans will not make the right first impression with most employers either. This is important even if you are a freshman just beginning to think about internship opportunities.
- Make eye contact when introducing yourself.
- Give a firm handshake.
- Remember the representative's name. Hint: Repeat his or her name in conversation to help you remember.
- Smile and be polite and enthusiastic about the company/school.
- Do not fidget or play with your hair.
- Do not rock from side to side.
- Refrain from looking around when talking or being spoken to.
- Do not chew gum.
- Ask questions in a genuine manner. Don't bombard the employer with questions; maintain a natural flow. Be yourself!
- Listen carefully to what the representative has to say. Be courteous.
- Avoid using filler words such as "um," "like" and "you know."
- Show confidence in your voice. If they can't hear you, they won't remember you.
- Offer your resume. You might also consider including a business card with your name, university, address, home address, telephone number, e-mail address and graduation date.
- Before leaving, be sure to close the conversation and thank the representative for his or her time. Ask for a business card or write down the representative's name.
- Speak with organizations that you had not previously considered.
- Take the initiative and engage in meaningful conversations with representatives.
- Representatives can be excellent resources in your career search and decision-making process.

ITEMS TO BRING TO CAREER FAIRS

- Portfolio/folder to hold your resumes and notes
- Copies of your resume and/or portfolio
- List of your targeted companies
- Pen and paper for making notes
- Gator1 card (for UF events)

AFTER THE CAREER EXPO

- Send a thank you note to representatives from the companies you are interested in. This can help remind them of your name as a potential or future candidate.
- Consider mailing an additional resume with your thank you letter.