

# How to Work a Job Fair

## PREPARE: What to Do Before the Job Fair

1. **Write a good resume that sells your capabilities to employers.** Use a profile paragraph instead of an objective: Put the job title at the top of the resume and follow it with a paragraph that summarizes who you are and what your offer: your expertise, your experience, your character. It's you-as-employee in a nutshell.

*For instance:*

### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Competent right-hand office professional with ability to juggle multiple priorities in a fast-paced, high stress environment. Experienced in handling multiple phone lines, filing, word processing and interacting with vendors. Excellent spelling and grammar. Particular expertise in event and meeting planning. Proficient in Word, Excel and Powerpoint. Friendly, intelligent, resourceful – able to anticipate needs of managers and clients. Good people skills.

Make several copies of your resume.

2. **Learn which employers are expected to be at the job fair and go to their websites.** Learn as much as you can about what products or services they offer and who their customers or clients are. Read recent press releases (look for a link called “Press Room” or “News”) to learn what events of significance have happened to them or is about to happen. Is a merger in the works? Did they just get a new CEO? Did they open new locations? Did they launch a new product? Are they expanding into new markets? Be ready to be conversant on the company and how your role your would fit with their organizational goals. (Think like a business person.)
3. **Apply for a job at the company. This is important.** If you submit your resume online before you go to the job fair, then you can tell recruiters to *watch for your resume in the system*. If you don't apply before you go to the fair, they'll tell you to apply on the website. Speed up the process by doing what they want before the fair. This is especially true with large companies, who get thousands of applicants.
4. **Develop and practice your 30-second “elevator pitch.”** If you were in the elevator with the president of a company, could you give him/her enough info about you to make him/her want to hire you by the time the ride was over? This is your tight, 30-sec speech that lets people know why you're interested in their company and how your background is relevant to the position you want.

*For example:*

“Hi, my name is Rhonda, and I've been following Salesforce.com in the news. It seems like a good company that's been growing a lot lately. I know you're looking for customer support representatives, and that's a position I've held at another software company. I like people and I enjoy helping clients solve problems. I'm interested in technology and I'm very reliable.”

*If you have already applied for a job, then you can say:*

“I’ve applied for the customer support position on your website and here’s a copy of the resume I submitted.”

**THIS WILL REALLY MAKE YOU STAND OUT AMONG JOB SEEKERS!** You will show that you are proactive and *very serious* about getting hired.

## **ACT: What to Do the Day of the Job Fair**

- 5. Dress for the job fair as if you were dressing for an interview.** Dress conservatively with coordinating or matching slacks and jacket *or* skirt and blazer. “Jacket” means suit or sports jacket – suitable business attire – not a windbreaker or hoodie. Also acceptable is a nice pullover sweater. Stick to solid colors (or subtle stripes like pinstripes). White or light shirts and blouses... and black, gray, navy or tan suits.
  - **Men:** Wear a tie. Shoes should be neat and shined (no sneakers or sports shoes).
  - **Women:** Wear subtle, conservative makeup and small jewelry (no big earrings). If you want to add some personality, try a bright scarf.

Yes, it’s a little boring, but the recruiters need to know if you can dress up if the occasion demands it. (They assume you can dress down!) Shower, shave, brush teeth, and clean your fingernails. Hair should be clean and neat.

- 6. Armed with your resumes, make your rounds to the tables.** Greet the recruiters (firm handshake: web-to-web, good eye contact, broad smile) and give them your pitch (be energetic), then be quiet and listen. *They might give you tips on how to get the job.* Tell them you’ve applied online (if you have) and give them your resume. Get the recruiter’s business card and make a mental note of their name. They might ask you questions. Answer honestly, but emphasize that you are eager to learn. Ask your questions, if you have any – such as how many positions they’re hiring for, the future company direction or what you can do to increase your chances of getting an interview. Thank the recruiter by name and shake hands again.

**Tip:** Go to your favorite employers first, since you might not be able to visit all the booths (another good reason to find out exactly who is going to be at the fair – so you can strategize your route).

## **FOLLOW UP: What to Do After the Job Fair**

- 7. Email or call each recruiter about a week after the fair to remind them who you are.** Tell them you enjoyed meeting them at the fair last week and remind that your resume is already in the system. Ask if they’d like you to come in for an interview.

**CHANCES ARE... THEY’LL MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOU RIGHT THEN!**