



Preparing for the Job Fair

Job fairs provide a quick and convenient opportunity to apply to several companies and in some cases to get immediate interviews. Companies participate in job fairs for one main reason – to screen candidates for existing or future job openings.

You should remember that employers are investing time and resources to participate in the job fair. Unless job seekers do their homework, they waste their own time and the employer's time. Employers appreciate job seekers who are prepared and have a professional attitude. Job seekers appreciate company representatives who are easy to approach and have clear answers to their questions. If both sides prepare adequately, job fairs can be beneficial for everyone!





**Explore Career Options.
Network with Employers.
Envision Your Future.**

Reasons for Attending a Job Fair

- 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 skills and background
- Learn more about employers and available positions
- Receive sound job search advice from seasoned company recruiters

What to Expect at a Job Fair

- Employers expect you to be prepared (dressed professionally, ask thoughtful questions, have a polished resumé)
- Employers expect to interact with people seeking information on career opportunities and employment
- Your goal should be to land an interview - not necessarily a job offer. Most recruiters are not authorized to hire candidates on the day of the job fair
- You should expect to have a relatively short amount of time to sell yourself and make a positive impact on the employer. Employers' goals are to be exposed to as many job candidates as possible



Attending the Job Fair

Attending a job fair 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. Here are some tips to consider before, during, and after the job fair.

Before the Job Fair



Prepare a resumé that is well written and error free. Adapt your resumé to the specific jobs you are applying for. If you're uncertain about the quality and content of your resumé, visit an employment or guidance counselor.



Make sure you have multiple copies of both your resumé and list of references on hand your resumé, visit an employment or guidance counsellor.



If there is potential for on-the-spot interviewing or hiring at the job fair, take reference letters and cover letters, and assemble a professional portfolio.



Create a one-minute introduction about yourself. Your introduction should explain: who you are, your qualifications and accomplishments, special skills and values that set you apart from other applicants, one or two examples of how you could benefit the company.



Make a list of employers you would like to meet with at the job fair.



Practice your introduction out loud until you feel comfortable, confident and enthusiastic, yet natural. Your delivery of your introduction is perhaps more important than the content.



Research companies/sectors in which you are most interested. Learn who the companies are and what they do (check the company website if they have one).



Create a list of questions you want to ask employers. Be prepared to ask relevant questions to these employers. This will make you an interesting and memorable applicant.



Plan your strategy. Plan to visit booths first that interest you the most (when your energy is high and you're at your best).



Prepare to answer questions because employers will be asking them. Review standard interview questions in this guide and formulate your responses.



Plan to dress appropriately. First impressions are very important. Unprofessional attire is one of the leading reasons candidates are not considered.



Set realistic expectations. You might not be hired on-the-spot at the job fair. Be prepared to follow-up on promising leads.

During the Job Fair



As you arrive, be polite to people in the parking lot, hallway, or restroom - anyone could be a recruiter.

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Turn off your cell phone and do not carry any food or drinks.

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Check-in at the registration table. Get a copy of the job fair layout and/or the employer participation list. Determine where employers are located and in what order you plan to visit them.

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Be confident and display enthusiasm. Smile, walk with good posture, and make consistent and direct eye contact. To further demonstrate your self-confidence visit employers' tables on your own.

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Approach your targeted companies. As you approach the table, respect other people's privacy as they complete their interaction with the employer. If there is a long line to speak to a representative, keep moving and return later.

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Introduce yourself when it's your turn to meet the employer. Take a deep breath, smile, shake hands firmly and begin your introduction. 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.

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Ask meaningful questions without monopolizing the employer's time. Do not ask about salary at this time. If you are still in school, ask about internships, co-op placements, summer jobs and scholarship opportunities.

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Prepare to follow-up, thank the employer for his/her time, leave a copy of your resumé, ask the employer for a business card and protocol for follow-up and jot down a few notes about your conversation. You may want to include a few memorable discussion points when you follow-up.

After the Job Fair



Give yourself the competitive edge and do not make the mistake of thinking that as soon as you have spoken to the last employer and left the facility that you are finished. Following up is essential.

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Review your notes from the job fair. Evaluate what you think went well and what you can improve for the next job fair or interview.

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Continue to research the companies that interest you. Treat the Job Fair as an initial contact, not the last.

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Keep accurate records of your contacts, including the dates of your letters or telephone calls, and copies of all application materials that you send.

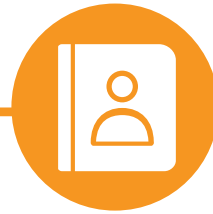
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Be persistent and observe the follow-up procedure suggested by the employer. Once you have complied with these procedures, and a reasonable amount of time has passed since you heard from the employer, it is okay to send an email or call to inquire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

Things to remember!



Ask about the application procedure and hiring process. What's the time-frame? Is there a convenient time to call to follow-up?



Request a business card or obtain a contact name, phone number, fax, and email.



Greet each employer with a smile and firm handshake. Make eye contact, and be polite!



Ask questions directly, politely, and concisely. The goal is to be invited back for an 'in-house' interview.



If you're given an application form, take time to fill it out neatly and completely. The way you fill out the application is in itself an example of your work.



Listen carefully to what the employers say. The room may be noisy and busy, but don't be distracted. Focus, focus, focus! Don't let promotional 'freebies' on the table distract you.

Interview Questions You Should Always Prepare For

We have put together a list of some of the most common interview questions along with some tips for preparing your responses.

Tell me about yourself.

- Demonstrate your ability to communicate information clearly and concisely.
 - Demonstrate your ability to prioritize and your understanding of the employer's needs by selecting the information about you that is of most interest to them.
- Briefly touch on the following:
- Your experience related to the job.
 - Your attributes, including your ability to get along with others and appropriate personal information to show stability and a well-rounded character.

Tell me about your experience with this type of work.

- If you have done this work, state where and give examples of your achievements.
- If you have done related work, state your transferable skills. Show your interest in the position and your willingness to learn.
- If you have not done this work, mention other work-related attributes and skills.
- Quickly show your interest in on-the-job training.

What do you know about this company?

- This question tests how well you know what the company does and how passionate you are about the work they do
- Make sure you know the company well and can speak truthfully about your desire to work there.
- Demonstrate that you have put time into researching the company and preparing for the interview
- Interviewers may also ask why you want to work there - this is a great opportunity to showcase what you know about the company and connect your skills and experiences to the job description

Interview Questions Continued

What kind of machines/software can you operate?

- Be as specific as possible
- If you haven't had experience with the equipment required, describe some similar software you have worked with

What are your greatest strengths?

- Mention that besides the work skills, training and experience that you would offer, you also offer job-related qualities such as reliability, enthusiasm, dependability, flexibility and efficiency.
- Support these qualities with examples.

What are your greatest weaknesses?

- Describe a positive attribute, and then continue with a statement of reassurance. For example, "I feel that it is very important to meet deadlines; satisfy the customer; ... I have to really make myself be patient, diplomatic, firm, when I see that this is not happening."
- Briefly describe your weakness, and then describe factors that make up for it and what you are doing to combat this weakness.
- Remember, when you raise a doubt, explain it immediately. If you cannot think of any weaknesses, tell the employer.

What salary are you expecting?

- Mention a salary range - stating an exact figure may harm your chances.
- This is where your research can pay off.
 - If you know the going rate for this type of work, you can use that in your response.



Your Personal Introduction

First impressions at a job fair are very important. This is why you need to make sure you perfect your introduction. Here are a few tips!

- Keep it short - your introduction should only be about a minute long.
- Include your name, the reason you are approaching this employer, a highlight of your education/work experiences, and your career objectives.
- Remember to make references to your resume.
- Begin by shaking the employers hand with a confident smile.

“Hi, my name is _____. I am interested in a position as a sales associate with your company. As you can see from my resumé, I have over 10 years of experience working in customer service. I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you further. Thank you for your time.”

“Hi, my name is _____. I have recently graduated with a diploma in electrical engineering and I look forward to beginning my career in this field. You will notice from my resumé that I have experience working as an electrician’s assistant. Please consider me for a position with your company. Thank you.”



Use the space below to start writing your personal introduction:

Personal Skills Inventory

Think about how your skills, abilities, experiences, personal values and attitudes translate into skills you can market to possible employers. To get you started, here are some examples of what you might want to tell an employer:

If you...	You Might Want to Tell An Employer
Are good at talking on the phone	I communicate well; I am sociable and enjoy working with people
Are a natural at telling jokes and stories	I am self-assured and relate well to people. I enjoy speaking in public
Enjoy numbers and solving math problems	I have great math skills. I am precise and analytical
Make, build, or create and friends/family compliment your work	I have excellent manual dexterity, fine motor skills, and an eye for detail
Are up on music and know every song on the charts	I learn quickly and have a good memory

If you...	You Might Want to Tell An Employer
Keep your promises and so what you say you will do	I am reliable and take commitment seriously
Practice everyday at your favourite sport to be on a team	I am persistent, determined, motivated, and goal oriented
Always keep your workspace clean and tidy	I am orderly. I have strong organizational skills
Care about people and are patient	I am caring, sensitive, and people-oriented
Were the first one on your block to skateboard, rollerblade, and spike your hair	I am flexible and adapt easily to new situations. I am comfortable with change
Love to shop and find the best sales wherever you go	I am resourceful and have great budgeting skills

If you...	You Might Want to Tell An Employer
Like leading group/school projects and playing team sports	I work well as a team member and can take a leadership role
Are calm in tough situations when those around you are not	I am a good negotiator. I handle stress well and enjoy dealing with difficult situations
Usually save the day when those around you are giving up	I look for solutions and I am persistent in getting the job done

Behaviour Based Interview Questions

Be prepared to answer these common behaviour based interview questions.

Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation. What did you do? How did you react?

Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or exceed it.

Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond to get a job done.

Give me an example of a time that you showed initiative and took the lead.

Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with an upset customer or coworker. How did you handle it and what was the result?

What is your typical way of dealing with conflict?
Give me an example.

Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.

Check List

Last Minute Preparations

- ☐ I have clear and precise directions to the job fair site
- ☐ I have researched the companies and organization attending
- ☐ I have copies of my resume and cover letter
- ☐ I am confident in my ability to introduce myself to employers
- ☐ I am wearing clean and appropriate clothing
- ☐ I have prepared my answers to potential interview question
- ☐ I have a list of questions I may wish to ask employers
- ☐ I have turned off my cell phone upon arriving at the job fair
- ☐ I have a pen and paper incase I want to take notes
- ☐ I have an open mind and a positive attitude

DON'T FORGET

Conduct yourself professionally at all times. You are on stage even as you stand in line or move about the job fair area.



The Labour Market Group
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For more information on job seeker resources please
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www.thelabourmarketgroup.ca

