

# expoSition and Employment Fair Preparation Workshop

Wednesday, March 21, 2007

SI Career Services

# Agenda



- Why are you here?
- SI Employment Information Fair
  - Tips for preparation
  - Tips for at the fair
  - Tips for after the fair
- expoStion
  - Tips for presentation

# Questions to discuss

- Why are you here?
- What is an employment information fair?
- What is an exposition?
- How are these two events different?
- How can you make these events work to your advantage?

# Tips for Preparation

- Research Research Research!

- Check out who is coming to the fair (visit iTrack for a full listing of participants)
- Gather basic information about the organizations
  - Size, organization, locations, top management, their products, and standing in their industry
- Research demonstrates your interest in the organization and sets you apart from other, unprepared candidates

# Tips for Preparation

- **Prioritize**

- Develop a plan of attack for the career fair
- Visit your top choice companies first, then with other recruiters, and before you leave, return to your top choices
- Some organizations will have lines. Your time may be limited with each employer so make sure you leave enough time in your day to meet with each one and be prepared about what you are going to say

# Tips for Preparation

- Come Professionally Prepared
  - Finish polishing your resume. Review for keywords and accomplishments and check for typos and other spelling errors
  - Customize a resume for each targeted organization (even if it is something as small as inserting the organization's name into your job objective)
  - Print out extra copies of your standard resume to bring to the career fair -- just in case you need them

# Tips for Preparation

- Develop a Greeting

- Create or review your elevator speech -- a 15- to 30-second commercial that succinctly tells the person you are giving it to who you are, what makes you unique, and the benefits you can provide

- Job fairs offer brief meetings with recruiters (maybe 5 minutes). Be prepared so that you can make the most of your time

# Tips for Preparation

- Conveying your Skills and Abilities
  - Employers want to know what skills you have to bring to the position/organization
  - Before you go to a fair, give thought to your skills, accomplishments, experiences, interests, strengths/weaknesses
    - What do you have to bring to the organization?
    - What do you want the organization to know about you?
  - Be prepared with 2-3 examples to use
    - The team skills you developed through courses
    - The time management skills you developed by balancing courses with extracurricular activities and/or part-time work
  - Review common interview questions as well as prepare a few questions to ask the recruiters -- ones that can't be easily answered from available company information

# Tips for at the Fair

- Dress for success

- Employers say first impressions count so give some thought to what you wear
- Consider the type of organization/position you are interested in and take notice of what employers wear at presentations, on the organization website, or in their literature
- Keep in mind "business casual" may work at a fair, however, "business casual" doesn't mean "classroom casual"
- In general, it is better to be overdressed than underdressed
- You want the recruiter to focus on the content of your conversation ...not on what you're wearing

# Tips for at the Fair

- The conversation...

- Use your greeting / elevator speech to launch the conversation
- Answer their questions and showcase your knowledge of each company
- Remember to ask questions so you'll have a better understanding of which organizations are the best fit for you
- If you are considering relocating to a different state, once you've established rapport, ask the recruiter if you can obtain the name of the recruiter for that area. Also, ask the recruiter to forward your information to that other recruiter
- Remember not to overstay your welcome. If the recruiter starts looking over your shoulder, it's time to move on
- Remember that politeness counts. If the recruiter appears thirsty, offer to get a beverage from the refreshment area for him/her
- Don't forget to thank each person you speak with for taking the time to meet you and talk to you about opportunities with his/her organization

# Tips for at the Fair

- Being Professionally Prepared
  - Bring copies of your resume, unofficial transcript, reference sheets, pen/pencil, notebook and/or portfolio
- Stay Connected
  - As you finish up your conversation ask about next steps (will they be conducting interviews, what's the best way to stay in touch)
  - Collect business cards from each recruiter you chat with at the fair
- Keep a Job Fair Attitude at all Times
  - Believe it or not, the fair starts the moment you walk in the building
  - Mostly, you'll connect with recruiters at their booths
  - You may run into recruiters at the restaurants, the bookstore, the ATM...you never know where the conversation might start!

# A Few Extra Tips for at the Fair

- Bring your personal business card (which is not the business card of your current employer)
- Get a good night's sleep the night before
- Bring some breath mints, just in case
- Remember to pack pen and paper for jotting down notes, contact information, and other vital details
- Don't get distracted by all the free stuff
- Network, network, network
  - Make connections with people -- not just the recruiters but with fellow job-seekers, career professionals, and the like -- the more people in your network, the stronger it becomes

# Quick Review....



- Take the Initiative

- Use the greeting you prepared, introduce yourself and shake the recruiter's hand.

- Think skills

- Focus your conversation on your skills and interests as they relate to the organization

- Have questions prepared

- Use the research that you did to let the recruiter know of your interest and fit with the organization through questions

- Be polite, engaging, enthusiastic, and warm – don't forget to smile!

# Tips for After the Fair

- Stay in touch
  - Send timely thank you notes to all recruiters you meet to demonstrate continued interest
- Keep notes
  - Evaluate opportunities, impressions, highlights, correspondence/calls
- Keep up the good work
  - Use a variety of job search strategies in addition to job fairs to round out your job search
- Reflect on the experience
  - Consider your system, your execution, and your results. What might you have done more effectively? Make some initial plans for improvement before the next career fair

# The expoSItion



- Why are you participating in the expoSItion?
- What do you expect to get out of the experience?
- What do you think you should do to be successful?

# Tips for your Presentation

- Again, research is most important
  - When creating your presentation, think about the following:
    - Who is my audience?
    - What questions should I expect?
    - Why should people be interested in viewing my project?
    - Why did I do this project, what were the results, and what did I learn?
    - What about this project makes me valuable to an employer?
    - How is this project relevant to real world application?

# expoStion Considerations

- It's not just about what your project looks like and its concept – its also on your presentation of it
- The people who win the prizes don't always – or even typically – have the best projects. The winners just sold their project best.
- If you have a targeted employer in mind, make sure to go to the Employment Information Fair and invite them directly to come to the expoStion to see your project

# Tips



- Always stand next to your project – not in front of it or leave it unattended
- Be engaging – make eye contact and invite people to converse with you and see your work
  - “Hey, do you want to hear about my project?”
- Don’t just talk to your group mates
- Don’t just let them ask you question – you should ask questions also
- Don’t sit down or put you back to the audience
- Shake hands
- Be friendly, inviting, and engaging

# More Tips for the expoStion

- Have a tangible piece of information to give to an employer – resume, cards, CD, a highlighting document about your project
- Collect cards from employers
- Wear business casual attire
- Watch your computer – they can get stolen!

# Let's revisit these questions....

- Why are you here?
- What is an employment information fair?
- What is an exposition?
- How are these two events different?
- How can you make these events work to your advantage?
- What do you know now that you didn't before?

The slide features a dark blue background with five decorative circles. Two circles are arranged in a top row, and three are in a bottom row. The top-left circle is an outline, while the others are solid. The text 'Questions?' is centered over the top row, and 'Thank you!' is positioned to the right of the bottom row.

Questions?

Thank you!