



Explore



Engage



Experience



Embark



Elevate

Networking a Job Fair

STEP 1

Prepare your “30-second Commercial” (see handout). Practice it with people you know, re-write it and keep practicing until you sound confident and natural. This will be your introductory statement to employers at the fair.

STEP 2

Arrive early at the fair and stay as late as possible. Start by taking time to review the floor map. Check off the companies you wish to visit. Visit every single company that might have valuable leads or information since this is an ideal networking opportunity. But before stopping at your preferred companies, visit some of lesser interest to practice your marketing routine and gain confidence.

STEP 3

Attempt to establish rapport with each recruiter. Remember to smile, make eye contact, and offer a firm (but not death-grip) handshake. Use your 30-Second Commercial. To make it easier to circulate, carry a folder, not a briefcase. Bring numerous copies of a scannable resume.

STEP 4

Answer questions, showcase your knowledge of each company, but also remember to ask questions so you’ll have a better understanding of which organizations are the best fit for you. Gather information and materials from each organization’s booth. If they have some goodies (pens, magnets, etc.) feel free to take one, but don’t be greedy.

STEP 5

Ask about the organization’s recruiting timetable. Solicit information about the next step in the process. Remember not to overstay your welcome.

STEP 6

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. Better, ask the recruiter to forward your information to that other recruiter.

STEP 7

Don’t forget to collect business cards from each recruiter. And if you can’t get a business card, be sure to get all the contact information (including the correct spelling of each person’s name). 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.

STEP 8

Even if you don’t get a job directly from the fair, you will gain valuable new networking contacts. Afterwards, follow up with a thank you to the people you contacted. Remember, the point of networking is not to expect an immediate job offer, but rather to stay plugged into the “grapevine” to gather useful information and referrals to new contacts.