

FSC Career Development Center

Preparing for a Job Fair

PREPARE TO MAKE A STRONG IMPRESSION

- **Prepare for the Job Fair as you would an interview.**
- **Learn the names of employers who will be attending** - It's not enough to know that a job fair is hosting companies in your field. Review the Job Fair Directory's list of the participating employers. Don't be quick to eliminate recruiters simply because they are offering positions outside of your field. Networking with these recruiters may lead you to obtain the name of a hiring manager in your field. The Job Fair Directory will be posted to our website the week before each Fair at www.farmingdale.edu/careercenter.
- **Research the organizations that are of interest to you.** LinkedIn's company search is a great tool to utilize in your research. You might even try to connect with recruiters listed in the Job Fair Directory on LinkedIn before attending the Fair. You can also visit the company website. Be prepared to answer the question, "Why do you want to work for us?"
- **Review the specific job opportunities in the Job Fair Directory** - Even though you may have done your research on an employer and studied their company profile, the Directory may include details on specific job or internship opportunities for which an employer is currently recruiting.
- **Know what you are going to say to each employer** - You may have just 60 seconds to present your "elevator speech" to each employer, so think carefully about what you want to say and how best to say it. How would you describe the **relevant** aspects of your education, skills, experience and training in 60 seconds or less?
 - Be sure to discuss:
 - Your name, class (senior, junior, sophomore) and major
 - Career area of interest
 - Relevant experience (internship, volunteer, work)
 - Skills and abilities that are relevant to the position
 - Your knowledge of the particular company – something of interest

"Hi. My name is _____. I'm a student here at Farmingdale and will be graduating next month with a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Programming. Over the past couple of years, I have worked part-time as a help-desk technician here on campus and have had a great internship experience with a local IT firm, as well. I'm skilled in technical applications and computer problem-solving. I have received consistent positive feedback from my supervisors about my ability to make technical concepts easily understood to customers. In one of my current programming classes, I've

really enjoyed learning about networking systems. I understand that your company is a world-leader in networking components and that you are expanding your team of help desk professionals. I'm very interested in learning more about this opportunity."

- **Develop a list of questions to ask employers** - You can't anticipate how much time you may have with each employer. You may be asked if you have any questions. Prepare a few good questions for each employer. Some examples:
 - Can you tell me more about the ... (product, training program, etc.)?
 - What type of person are you looking for?
 - What is a typical career path for someone with my background?
 - What are some of the daily functions and responsibilities in this position?
 - Does your company provide any training?
 - How did you get into this field?
 - What do you like best about working in this industry?
 - What is the next step in the application process?
- **Bring one or more versions of your updated resume** - If the employers are interested in different skill sets or if you are searching for different types of jobs, you may want to develop different versions of your resume, each highlighting different aspects of your background and experience. Bring several copies. Be prepared to discuss everything on your resume. Visit the Career Center for assistance with updating your resume.
- **Prepare your professional business attire.** Conservative business attire should be worn. It's always preferable to overdress than under dress. Even though the job fair is on a Thursday afternoon, you will still need to dress as if you were going on an interview.
- **Prepare your portfolio in advance.** Make sure that you have sufficient copies of your resume, a notepad, as well as any other important materials, including work samples, if applicable, which illustrate your talent and/or experience.

DAY OF THE JOB FAIR: NAVIGATING THE FAIR EFFECTIVELY

- The day of the job fair has arrived. **Remember to turn off your cell phone** and get ready to make some positive impressions!
- Upon entering, pick up a Job Fair Directory. There may be some last-minute additions. Identify where your target employers are located in the room. Plan your approach, but remain open to meeting with employers from outside your targeted group. Save your #1 and #2 employers for last. This will give you time to warm up and practice with others first.
- **Approaching the employer's table.** Wait patiently for your turn if another candidate is speaking with the employer. Don't interrupt a current conversation.
- As you approach the employer: **Make eye contact; firmly shake hands, be pleasant and show enthusiasm** as you introduce yourself, remembering your elevator speech. Take

advantage of your time to build rapport with the employer. Be mindful not to monopolize their time, especially if other job-seekers are waiting.

- Say the employer's name several times throughout your conversation. This helps to make the conversation more personal and will help you to remember their name.
 - **Collect business cards and company material** for your follow-up with each employer. It is important to have accurate and complete information. If no business cards are available, be sure to write down their contact information.
 - **Don't underestimate the importance of networking with other job seekers** and professionals at the fair. You can learn a lot by talking with fellow job seekers. Their impressions can help you learn more about the participating employers.
 - **Plan for follow-up** – Take the initiative and ask the employer about the next step in the process or what you should do to follow up. Take a moment to write down some notes after you leave an employer's table. This information may be very useful to include in your follow-up letter.
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JOB FAIR FOLLOW-UP

- **Follow-up within 24-48 hours** of the Job Fair. E-mail, write or call your company contacts.
 - Why it's important to follow up:
 - If you're excited about a particular opportunity, it's important to reiterate your interest.
 - Thank the employer for their time and for showing interest in you as a candidate.
 - Help the employer remember who you are! Companies will have screened numerous candidates and received several resumes.
 - What to say:
 - Mention the position/s you discussed and the date, location of the job fair
 - Highlight a particular point of interest in the conversation, such as a new project that the company will be working on
 - Reiterate one or two reasons why you are a strong candidate for the job/internship
 - Offer to provide additional information, if needed
 - If applicable, restate the schedule for the hiring process. "I'm looking forward to hearing from you sometime in the next two weeks."
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