Career Fair Tips

Attending a job fair can be exciting and intimidating. Here are some helpful tips to make you confident, comfortable and prepared for the USC Career Fairs!

Take the Event Seriously
This is your moment to impress the recruiter or representative. First impressions are very important. Only a small percentage of students will stand out in the minds of recruiters by the end of the event. Be one of those people. Dress professionally, practice your best handshake, make eye-contact and most importantly, be prepared. Research the companies before the Career Fair and bring plenty of copies of your most recent resume. Don’t have your significant other or friends hanging around you when you talk to representatives. The recruiter is not looking to hire a team of you and your friends, only you.

Create the Ideal Package
Know who you are. Be confident in your presentation. In the one minute that the recruiter invests in your resume, the employer should quickly understand your experiences and skills. Ensure that your resume is polished, concise and digestible. Career advisors can help you with your resume. Each semester we host resume workshops dedicated to helping you fine-tune your presentation to create the ideal package. The workshop schedule can be accessed through the calendars section of our web site at http://careers.usc.edu.

Plan Your Strategies Carefully
Develop a specific strategy for maximizing your time at the event. A list of participating organizations is made available on the Career Center web site and connectSC weeks before the event. Make a list of organizations that you’re interested in and research them. Visit their web sites, learn the latest news on them, prepare questions about them and try to find out what positions they are looking to fill. Your preparation will become evident in your interaction with company representatives. You’ll be able to engage in relevant conversation and ask more intelligent questions. Do not be the student asking “So tell me about your company.” You are interested in an interview, right? Prepare yourself with information.

Know Who You’re Talking To
It’s easy to get confused with over 150 organizations at each event. Prepare a specific list of questions for each organization you plan on talking with. Make sure you know who you’re talking to. Don’t call the recruiter by the wrong name! Don’t mention another company’s name. The representative will realize that you’re not paying attention and won’t call you back.

It’s a Dialogue, Not a Monologue
Don’t waste their time or yours. You only have a couple of minutes to impress them. Be prepared with your questions. Ask good questions that will help you decide whether you really would like to work for this organization. Don’t be afraid or intimidated by the recruiter; he/she is there to do a job—to meet and screen potential candidates. Don’t wait for them to make the first move, take the initiative to begin the conversation.

Communication
The number one skill that recruiters are looking for is communication skills. Can you communicate effectively with them? This is an indicator of how well you will communicate with colleagues and clients. Your resume may be the best they’ve seen, but it becomes irrelevant if you can’t effectively communicate. Words of advice: Don’t be afraid, just be comfortable with who you are.

Follow-Up
If you are interested in moving to the next level, which means a more formal interview, let them know. Ask them about the next step. Ask for the recruiter’s business card and e-mail address and make sure you know the name of the person you spoke with from each organization. Once you have their information you can thank them for their time or ask follow-up questions by sending a thank-you letter or card. If an interview isn’t scheduled immediately, don’t worry; your card might help them decide to invite you back.