Job Fairs can be critical tools for job search success...whether you use them to get an internship or job, or, whether you use them as a networking tool.

Companies attend job fairs as part of their recruiting strategy in order to connect with a large number of job seekers in one location. The purposes of the job fair are threefold: 1) Increasing a company’s visibility to a targeted audience, 2) Collecting resumes, and 3) Screening candidates on a one-on-one basis to determine if follow-up interviews are warranted. Students interested in connecting with a large number of companies in one location should attend a job fair. If you are entering into your Junior or Senior year, it is strongly encouraged that you attend to network with potential employers. Your goal is to secure an interview and/or a solid contact. Be sure to ask for a business card.

Remember, 85% of job opportunities are secured through networking. During a job fair recruiters and representatives interact with participants one-on-one and in small groups.
There are few companies where you can immediately influence the marketing strategies for some of the largest brands in the world.

This is one of them.

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Visit our booth at the career fair to learn more about our career opportunities

meclabs.com/careers
“You will have 2–3 minutes to communicate why a company should consider hiring you...”

Research
You should plan to arrive 30 minutes early to secure an up-to-date list of participating companies and to plan your strategy to approach each company of interest. Identify and prioritize your companies. You’re not going to be able to connect with every organization. The initial interaction is considered an interview, so prepare for your first exchange. It could lead to a new opportunity. You will have 2-3 minutes to communicate why a company should consider hiring you or possibly granting you an interview at a later date. Follow-up with each of the companies of interest that you made contact with.

Preparation is the key to standing out! Research companies that you’re interested in meeting. Have at least 20-25 resumes. Be professional and polite and don’t be afraid to smile. Have a prepared opening statement that highlights your strengths and what you have to offer a company. Practice! Have prepared questions that you can ask and don’t be afraid to interact during your exchange.

Dress Professionally
Dress appropriately. If you’re serious about securing a full-time job or internship, dress professionally in interview attire. Women: dress conservatively, nice solid color suit (pant suits are acceptable), neat hairstyle, limited jewelry, easy on the perfume and make-up, clean and trimmed nails. Men: A Nice suit or sport coat and slacks, tie, white long sleeve shirt, dark socks and shoes, limited jewelry, neat hair cut, easy on the aftershave, clean and trimmed nails.

Be Prepared
You will be talking with a lot of representatives during the day. Bring a small portfolio that includes a pad and pen. It will also enable you to carry copies of your resume. As you collect business cards be sure to write notes so that you have enough information to follow-up with the representatives that you talk to. Your resume should provide the representatives with a summary of your skills and qualifications. To ensure that you have a quality resume, schedule a resume critique appointment with your Career Coordinator before the job fair.

Arrive Early
Job fairs generally run for 3-4 hours. Company representatives talk to a lot of people during the course of the fair. Oftentimes they are tired by the end of the day and many even leave the fair before the official ending time. By arriving early, you can research the employers, plan your strategy, and talk to representatives when they are fresh and more alert.

Check Out The Set-up
When you get to the job fair don’t get intimidated by the noise and activity. Stay focused on your goal: to meet with those companies on your target list. Take a quick walk through of the job fair to understand how everything is set up and note the locations of your targeted companies. Companies do offer “give-aways” such as frisbees, stress balls, cups, mugs, candy, etc. It is ok to take these, but don’t get too carried away. You don’t want them to think that your only interest is in the give-aways.
Be Ready To Converse With the Reps

The company representatives will be talking with a lot of people throughout the fair and they soon become annoyed when they have to keep repeating very basic information about their organization. You should do your research and be knowledgeable about your target companies so that you can be more direct and make a connection between you and the company. You should have a well-practiced, short 30 second introduction. Tell the recruiter your name, your class year and whether you are interested in a full-time, part-time or internship position. You may then reveal your career interests, major and why you are interested in their company. If you are gathering information, let employers know that you are only interested in materials and information. Remember to use good eye contact and a firm handshake.

Try To Get A Business Card

Before you disengage with representatives, ask for their business card and ask if you can give them a copy of your resume. Ask them what steps you should take to follow-up with them. Take a few minutes immediately after you leave each booth to write detailed notes about the contact(s) you made.

Keep It Brief

Company representatives are hoping to meet with a lot of candidates during the job fair. Keep your conversation brief, make your key points, get the information you need, exchange your resume for a business card, and then move on to the next employer.

After the Job Fair

Follow-up is the key to making a job fair work for you. Recruiters will collect hundreds of resumes during the job fair and will have talked to a lot of candidates. Review your notes for following up, and send a cover letter and resume to the representative. Be sure to remind them that you spoke with them at the job fair and that they recommended that you follow-up. Ask for an interview. Tell them you will call them to try and set up a follow-up interview and then call them.

Final Thoughts

Remember, the company representatives are here to recruit UNF students and they want to talk to you. Make the most of these great opportunities!
Dress For Success: Women

- A suit or slacks/blazer/blouse in neutral colors (navy or dark color)
- Blouses should be cotton or silk (white or light pastel color)
- Pantyhose should be flawless (no runs) and conservative in color.
- Basic pumps with 1”-2” heel (no sandals or open-toe shoes)
- Simple accessories. No visible piercings (nose rings, eyebrow rings, etc.)
- Make-up should be minimal and in conservative tones
- Minimal cologne or perfume
- Light briefcase or portfolio case
Dress For Success: Men

- A suit or slacks/blazer/blouse in neutral colors (navy or dark color)
- Shirts should be cotton (white or light pastel color)
- Tie should be conservative
- Shoes should be shined
- Simple accessories. No visible piercings (nose rings, eyebrow rings, etc.)
- Minimal cologne or aftershave lotion
- Light briefcase or portfolio case
INTRODUCTION

Whether you are submitting a cover letter and resume in application for positions, or meeting face-to-face with recruiters at job fairs, you need to convince the employer that you are the right person for their employment needs. In order to make a good case for your candidacy, you need to be knowledgeable about yourself (your skills, values, goals, etc.) and also be knowledgeable about the company or organization.

By demonstrating your knowledge about the organization/company, it shows you have done your research, taken initiative, and have a true interest in working for them. Some of the questions they will ask is: “why do you want to work for us?” and “what do you know about our company/organization?”

WHAT INFORMATION IS HELPFUL

Here are some of the basic questions you might want to consider when researching a company or organization:

- What products/services does the employer provide?
- What is the mission of the company/organization?
- When was it created/started and why?
- Where are their headquarters or main office? Are there other locations?
- What industry trends are affecting the company?
- How many employees does the employer have?
- What jobs does the company typically hire for?
- What is the employer’s hiring policy?
- Is the employer involved in community services? If so, what?
- What is the employer’s financial situation? Is it making money? Has it downsized in the last five years?
- Has there been any recent important news related to the company?
- What do others think about the company?
SOURCES OF INFORMATION

People In Your Network:
When possible, it helps to talk to someone who works for or knows about the organization. Check your network of contacts: faculty members, administrators, fellow students, alumni, etc. to see if anyone has some inside information about the company/organization.

Next Stop: The Employer’s Website
In the age of a global economy, most companies/organizations will have a website that should provide the information you need. Many of these websites will also include an online application process.

The Internet
There are a lot of great websites available that can provide information about companies and organizations. Here are just a few:

Companies

- Linked In- Use the company directory or “search companies” features [https://www.linkedin.com/](https://www.linkedin.com/)
- Glassdoor.com- Insider information on over 100,000 companies [http://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm](http://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm)

Non-Profit Organizations

- Guidestar- this site gather and disseminate information about every single IRS-registered nonprofit organization. They provide as much information as we can about each nonprofit's mission, legitimacy, impact, reputation, finances, programs, transparency, governance, and so much more. [http://www2.guidestar.org/](http://www2.guidestar.org/)

Request Information Directly From the Company or Organization
If you have exhausted all known resources for researching the company and you are not able to find any information, it is perfectly acceptable to contact them by phone, letter, or email to request information.

More resources:
[http://www.unf.edu/careerservices/Social_Media.aspx](http://www.unf.edu/careerservices/Social_Media.aspx)
[http://www.unf.edu/careerservices/Networking.aspx](http://www.unf.edu/careerservices/Networking.aspx)
Creating Your “30 Second Introduction”

Your “30 Second Job Fair Introduction”
Employers come to the University of North Florida and participate in job fairs to meet and screen a large number of students and alumni, collect resumes, and determine candidates for follow-up interviews. During the course of the job fair, employers meet and greet hundreds of students. When you approach an employer at their booth, you have just a short time to introduce yourself, talk about some of your accomplishments, ask them questions, and engage them in conversation. Before going to a job fair, consider developing and practicing your 30 Second Introduction out loud so that you have it perfected by the time you meet employers. A good introduction relies on research. You should spend time researching the company and becoming knowledgeable about them and their opportunities. You can show your knowledge about them when you introduce yourself and this goes a long way toward impressing them. Remember, it is your responsibility to find out about the company and their opportunities. Don’t simply meet the employer and ask them to tell you about their organization and what they have to offer.

UNF Career Services always has a listing and websites for all employers who will be participating in the job fairs so it is easy to do your homework prior to the job fair.

What To Include In Your 30 Second Introduction

- Your Name
- Your Academic Major (And Minor if applicable)
- Graduation month/year
- Certifications
- Your Job/Internship/Volunteer Experience
- What qualities you possess that match what is required for success on the job (i.e. a good attitude, staying cool under stress, etc.)
- Study or teaching abroad experience
- Leadership experience
- Activities
Questions You Might Ask

- Do you have a formal internship program or do you host students on a case-by-case basis?
- Do you have an internship coordinator I could contact if I have specific questions?
- When is the best time of year to apply for a summer internship?
- What experiences might I have as an intern in your organization?
- What courses or majors do you look for in potential interns?
- “I am exploring majors in ____ and ____. How would I use one of these majors in your company?”
  (Be sure the company has positions in these majors.)
- “Are there any course electives that you would recommend?”
- “From your website, I learned ________. What do you think is an important trend for the future?”
- “What competencies do you expect in successful candidates?”
- “How do you feel about your job or this company?”
- What skills do you look for in candidates?
- What type of previous work experiences do you look for in candidates?
- What is the best way to apply to your organization, and how long does the process usually take?
- Will you be on campus to interview or host other events?

If you are truly interested in an organization, definitely check out their website and call the person to follow up that week. Remind them of who you are because they will have met hundreds of people potentially in a few days.

Here is an example of a 30 Second Introduction:

“Good afternoon, my name is Harriett Osprey, and I am a marketing major here at UNF. I will be graduating in April 2014. I noticed on your website that you are looking for marketing majors that can help develop a new social media campaign. I recently did an internship with the Adams Advertising Agency here in Jacksonville and the focus of my internship was developing social media. I have extensive experience with Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and other social media resources. I was involved in a semester-long team project where we developed a comprehensive outreach program designed to reach college age students. I feel that my academic experience, my internship, and my skills would make me an excellent candidate for your company. What kinds of qualities are you looking for in a candidate?

Can I give you a copy of my resume and may I have one of your business cards. Would it be ok to call you after the job fair to pursue my interest in your company further?”
A Word About Give-Aways

Companies come to the job fairs and give out lots of interesting items such as pens, candy, Frisbees, stress balls, stuffed animals, highlighters, and much more. It is ok to pick up the give-aways after talking with employers but that should not be your main goal. Loading up your bag with a lot of give-aways lets the employers know that you were not really serious about your career and engaging in conversation about job and career opportunities. So be selective about which give-aways you pick up. Your focus should be on interacting with the employer representatives at the booths.

Be Prepared to carry on a conversation with the recruiter

Expect that the recruiter will take over the conversation, so follow her lead courteously. At this point, you have piqued her interest by providing a succinct overview of who you are and what you can do for his company. Prepare to answer some typical interview questions, including, “Why exactly do you want to work for our company?” and, “What do you think makes your work stand out from other people who are attending this job fair?”

Sample questions employer may ask you

- Tell me about yourself.
- What kind of position are you looking for?
- What geographic areas are you interested in?
- Why did you stop at our table today?
- May I have a copy of your resume?

At the conclusion of your conversation, hand your résumé to the employer and ask for his/her business card.
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