

Put on Your Professional Face: Career Fair Do's and Don'ts



Lake Tech's Career Fair is right around the corner—Wednesday, May 3. Make sure that your students are prepared for it in order to effectively network, and even land a job.

For the next two weeks, my Tech Tips will be geared to students preparing for the upcoming Career Fair and tips for networking and procuring a job. [Please share with your students.](#)

Resume

DO: Bring your resume to your **school's career center (that's me....Room 208A)** to have it reviewed, or use guidelines from your career center website and ask a peer to proofread the final draft.

DON'T: Go beyond one page. Key information should be seen all at once.

DO: Highlight key points that show your unique experience.

Appearance

DO: Wear business casual or your school uniform. If you are not wearing business casual, don't let that prevent you from going. It's not a deal breaker," she says.

DON'T: Look messy, unprofessional or inappropriate. Steer clear of controversial graphic tees and club attire.

Preparation

DON'T: Bring a cover letter. You are the cover letter! You get to introduce yourself and do the job of a cover letter.

DO: Your homework. Sign up early and research the companies you are interested in before attending. During your conversation with the company representative, throw in a sentence that references something that you learned during your research.

DON'T: Say "I looked at your website." Show them, do not tell them. You should avoid saying, "tell me about your organization." It proves that you have not done your homework.

At the Career Fair

DO: Have a 30 second 'commercial' ready. Include an introduction, why you are interested and what you bring to the table.

DON'T: Approach your top choices first. Go to less desirable booths first in order to get comfortable with the process.

DO: Take a few notes after each station. Record certain points that will help you remember the representative you spoke with and what was discussed.

Overall

DO: Always send a thank you note. It is best to follow up 24 to 48 hours after a fair. Make sure to include a highlight from your conversation with the representative and inquire about the next steps you should take in order to continue communication. An email is great, but consider sending a hand-written or typed note (if your handwriting isn't fabulous) via snail mail to the companies you are most interested in.

DON'T: Assume you are too young or inexperienced to attend a career fair. Underclassmen should attend. It is never too early to start networking; the more connections you have, the better.

DO: Take the opportunity to get yourself out there. Even if the positions you are looking for are not advertised, a representative may forward your resume on to another department.

Summary:

1. Be able to express your qualifications clearly.
2. Have your 30-second commercial memorized.
3. Get a list of the companies who will be at the career fair and research them.
4. Dress professionally or at least business casual, according to your program.
5. Show them that you know something about their company.
6. Ask a question or two about the company: Which positions do you have available? Or What qualities do you look for in an employee?
7. Have several copies of your resume' ready to hand out.
8. Ask for their business card
9. Follow up if you are interested

There are a couple of workshops coming up before the Career Fair that will help you:

CAREER FAIR SUCCESS

What to say, have with you, and how to approach the businesses during a Career Fair
Thursday, April 27, 11:00-11:30 am in the CSC

RESUME CREATING

Wednesday, April 26, 10 am – 1 pm in the Career Success Center (sign up in CSC)
Tuesday, May 2, 10 am – 4 pm in the Career Success Center (sign up in CSC)

30 Second Commercial

The 30-second commercial is a statement to describe the skills, experiences, and services that you have to offer an employer. It is essentially a brief monologue that sells your professional abilities and reflects your ideal job profile.

How do I create it?

Choose a combination of the following components that will comprise your pitch:

Greetinginclude your first and your last name

Experienceaccumulated experience in your specific industry and jobs

Areas of Expertise.....your major job functions and skill categories

Strengthsspecific skills that you possess

Accomplishmentsspecific accomplishments that emphasize your strengths

Professional Style....traits & characteristics that describe how you perform your job

Job Search Strategy.....what you want to do with your experience

Example:

Greeting: Hello, my name is _____.

Experience: I'm an experienced _____.

Areas of Expertise: I have ____ years of experience in the _____ industry with expertise in _____, _____ and _____.

Strengths: My strengths are _____, _____ and _____.

Accomplishments: I have been recognized for _____.

Professional Style: I'm _____, _____ and _____.

Job Search Strategy: I am interested in expanding my experience into _____.

Create your 30-second commercial below: