



# Working the Career Fairs

The Career Services Center ■ Marshall University

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The opportunity to attend the career fairs coordinated by the Career Center should be a must for any student from freshman to senior. The employers are there to collect resumes and talk to you and the other attendees. For the opportunity to be most effective you need a plan or strategy. Don't just show up unprepared collecting toys and chocolate. And most imperative, *don't show up poorly dressed*—minimum is khaki pants and a dress shirt or better. Here are some tips to make your career fair attendance a success.

## Research

- The Career Center posts the attendees on its website.
- Check out who will be attending.
- Use various sources to research the employers you want to meet with.

## Travel Light

- Dress comfortably and appropriately.
- Carry a portfolio or briefcase (not a purse).
- Take lots of resumes.

## Walk the Walk

- Look confident and smile.
- Carry yourself as if you were a CEO.
- Don't fold your arms.
- Look like you're having a good time.

## Who's Who

- Scan the crowd and pick your "targets."
- Circle the room, scanning name tags.
- Smile as you approach an employer.
- Don't read name tags while conversing.
- Always maintain eye contact—side glances make you look furtive and shifty.

## Cut to the Chase

- Approach the employer with your hand stretched out to shake hands, give your name, and briefly tell him/her why you are there. (Did you do your research?)
- After you tell your story, exchange calling cards. (If you don't have any, contact the Career Center.)

## Shaking Hands

- Be first to extend your hand.
- Make sure the handshake is a good one.
- *Shake hands at the end of the visit.*

## Test the Waters

- Ask questions that generate information, not yes or no responses.
- Don't go into your 20-minute ad.
- They're looking for personable people first and talented candidates second.

## Resume and Card Exchange

- Ask for a business card before offering a copy of your resume—it's less presumptuous.
- For a slight fee, the Career Center will make you mini resumes the size of calling cards. It is in no way meant to replace the traditional resume, but it's a good professional approach.

## Wrap It Up

- Send "thank you" notes that day, or no later than the next day.
- Follow up on any commitments or phone calls.
- You weren't there to close the deal, but to meet and introduce yourself.

## Networking

- You don't have to be in the job market to attend a career fair. They're for all students to gain information.
- Check out employers you might some day like to work with.
- Get quality information about your career goals from the experts.
- Start getting yourself noticed—you'll soon be in the full-time job market. Don't expect miracles if they only meet you during your last semester.

Located on the South-West corner of Fifth Avenue and 17th Street, the Career Services Center is staffed with Career Coaches who will help with this information and other related job search skills. Call (304) 696-2370 for an appointment.