

Job Fair Do's & Don'ts

"You really have to think of yourself as a walking, talking, breathing resume," says Bob Cramer, president of Career Concepts USA, a Cary, Ill.-based company that hosts more than 300 job fairs each year. "Nothing replaces meeting someone face-to-face, and it's in that first two to ten minutes that they decide whether you are worth their time to take the next step."

- DO** pre-register for the event, and **DO** attempt to get the list of attending companies before the career fair.
- DO** dress professionally—conservative is always the safe choice.
- DO** bring enough copies of your resume to the career fair. And **DO** bring different versions of your resume if you are searching for different types of jobs.
- DO** have a specific strategy for maximizing your time at the event.
- DON'T** eliminate companies because they are recruiting for positions outside your field; take the time to network with the recruiter and get the name of a hiring manager for your particular career field.
- DO** attempt to research basic information about each company you hope to interview with at the job fair. A common career fair question from recruiters is, "Why do you want to work for our company?"
- DON'T** ever just walk up to a booth and interrupt a conversation; wait your turn and be polite, and maintain social distancing.
- DON'T** just drop your resume on the recruiter's table and walk off.
- DO** prepare a one-minute "commercial" that focuses on the unique benefits you can offer the employer—your unique selling proposition. And be prepared for a few common interview questions.
- DO** have a few questions prepared for each recruiter, but **DON'T** ask questions that any good job-seeker should already know, such as "What does your company do?"
- DO** say the recruiter's name several times during your conversation. Get contact information from each recruiter.
- DO** remember all the keys to successful interviewing, including a warm smile, eye contact, and a strong voice.
- DON'T** forget to eliminate such bad habits as playing with your hair, chewing gum, fidgeting, rocking from side-to-side, acting distracted, rubbing your eyes, etc.
- DO** take advantage of the time you have to build rapport with each recruiter, but **DON'T** monopolize their time.
- DON'T** ever say anything negative to the recruiter about your previous jobs, companies, or supervisors.
- DO** be sure to ask about the hiring process of each company, but **DON'T** ask questions about salaries, vacation time, and other benefits.
- DO** take the initiative and ask about the next step in the process. And **DO** be prepared to follow-up all job leads.
- DO** be sure to follow-up with each recruiter. Some experts say to call and leave a message on their voicemail right after the job fair, but at a minimum you should send each recruiter a thank you letter within 48 hours.

Sources: careerpremierfair.com, livecareer.com