Thinking About Attending a Job Fair?

Who attends job fairs and why?
Job fairs may be the first step in landing an exciting and rewarding position, but you don’t have to be looking for a job to attend. It is an easy way to explore career possibilities, learn more about a company of interest, and get contacts so you can begin to network. Job fairs are also a great place to gather information on internships or part-time work.

Employers attend job fairs to provide information about their organizations and career opportunities, to increase awareness and visibility, and to attract candidates for internships, part-time, and full-time jobs.

The advantages to attending job fairs are clear. They provide a non-threatening, low-pressure environment for job seekers and employers to meet and learn more about each other; but you do need to be prepared to make a good first impression.

What should I do before the job fair?
Research and prepare! Find out what organizations will be there and research those that you intend to speak with. Understand what the company does and what types of positions they offer. Come up with a list of questions to ask.

Clarify your goals. Why are you attending this job fair? Where do your career interests lie? Know yourself and your interests well so that you can convey them to the employers and answer any questions you may be asked.

Prepare a 30-60 second commercial. That’s as long as it should take! Be ready to say something about yourself, your interests, what qualifies you to be seeking this type of position, and something that demonstrates your knowledge of the organization. Practice what you want to say!

What should I do when I get there?
Arrive early. It’s good practice for the ‘real world’ and you’ll be first in line when employers are at their freshest and so are you!

Plan. After you register, read the booklet with the room layout. Develop a strategy. Where are the employers you want to speak with? What are they looking for? Who are the top 5 employers you’d like to see?

When you approach a table:
Introduce yourself with a firm handshake and a smile. When the recruiter introduces her/himself, repeat the name – “it’s nice to meet you Ms. Smith.” This will help you remember his/her name.

Let them know why you are interested in XYZ Company. Say your “commercial.” DON’T ask what jobs they offer. You should already know that.

Some employers may not take your resume. The organization may only accept resumes via their website. Remember to apply after attending the fair. State in your cover letter that you attended the fair and spoke with Ms. Smith.

Before leaving, ask the best way to follow-up and get the recruiter’s business card.

Once you walk away from the table (before you approach the next employer), use the back of the business card to jot a note to yourself on what was said and how you need to follow-up.

If the line for an employer is long, pick up their brochure and read it while you wait. You may gain more insight into the qualifications they seek to align your skills with their needs.

What can I do after the job fair?
Follow-up. If you discussed a specific means of follow-up with an employer (i.e. phone call, email), make sure you do it! Even if you didn’t discuss follow-ups, send thank you letters to the employers from the organizations that most interested you. The ability to write well and proofread are important skills to employers. Be certain the letter is grammatically correct and free from typos!

• Extend your appreciation for their time.
• Restate your interest and enthusiasm in the organization/position.
• Include important skills or experiences that you may have forgotten to mention.

A thank you letter can set you apart from other candidates and will remind the employer of you and your interest.

Tips for the job fair:
• Dress professionally in a business suit
• Distinguish yourself (i.e. tasteful scarf, Muhlenberg pin, tie, or portfolio)
• Keep resume easily accessible (bring lots of copies on quality bond paper)
• Be confident and enthusiastic
• Maintain eye contact
• Avoid distracting or nervous behaviors
• Ask questions that demonstrate knowledge of the company

SAVE THE DATES!!!
Muhlenberg Job/Internship Fair
Tuesday, October 30, 5pm-7:30pm MILLER FORUM
12th Annual Lehigh Valley Collegiate Career Expo
www.lvcce.org Wednesday, February 13, 2013
Holiday Inn, Fogelsville
ALL Job and Internship seekers welcome!