How to Prepare for the Career & Graduate School Fair

Why Should You Attend?
• Allows you to network with industry professionals:
  – Not all organizations may be recruiting but it’s a great chance to get an inside name you can follow up with
  – Some exhibitors will be recruiting for graduate level studies
• Learn about the various opportunities, professions, and graduate level studies
• Gain insight into skills & values needed in today’s workforce
• Make a contact
• Promote yourself

Why Do Organizations Attend?
• To fill current (or upcoming) job openings
• To showcase graduate studies programs
• To see the quality of MUN & CNA students/alumni
• To promote a profession or field
• To promote their organization as the one of choice
• To maintain relationships with universities/colleges

There are 3 Stages of a Career Fair:
• Before: The Preparation
• During: The Actual Event
• After: Follow-up

Before: The Preparation
• Know what you want to achieve by attending
• Know what exhibitors are attending
• Research organizations of interest
• Know the location of the event
• Know when it begins and closes
• Book Appointment with a Career Advisor or Review Tips on Career Services Website:
  – Resume & cover letter writing
  – Interview tips
• Develop an up-to-date resume
  – Have it critiqued beforehand and/or review our Resume and Cover Letter Writing Guide for sample resumes
  – Tailor your resume for each organization or job ad you apply for
• Have a business portfolio to carry your resume, a pen, notepad, etc...
• Plan your visit
• Develop some pertinent questions
• Develop a concise description of yourself, what your interests are & your future plans
• **Prepare an Introduction of Yourself and Your Skills**
  – A 30-second "sales pitch"
  – Name, year, major, opportunities seeking, relevant experience, skills and strengths, and company knowledge

**30- Second “Sales Pitch”**

PAWS is a useful technique when answering open-ended questions about yourself (e.g. “tell me about yourself” or “why should we hire you?”) during an interview but it can also be helpful during a sales pitch when speaking with industry professionals or attending events such as a Career Fair:

• **Personal** – who you are and why you are interested in the organization.
• **Academic** – your academic interests and how your education/training relates to the organization.
• **Work** – previous relevant work/volunteer experiences, and what you accomplished or gained from these experiences.
• **Skills** – the skills you developed or demonstrated in previous experiences and how they relate to the job or organization in general.

**During: The Actual Event**

• This is your chance to sell yourself
• **Dress Appropriately:**
  – The #1 complaint from past exhibitors has been students not dressing for the occasion
  – First impressions are lasting ones an employer has of you—make it a positive one
  – Business casual attire creates a better professional image than jeans and a t-shirt
  – Remember, you are representing the present and future of MUN and CNA students
• Approach the exhibitors to converse & find out more about what they offer
• Extend a warm greeting and firm handshake
• Introduce yourself by using your full name
• Maintain good eye contact
• Show enthusiasm and zeal
• Hand out your resume
• Create small talk
• **Ask good questions**
  – What skills are important for this work?
  – Do you have any advice for someone who is interested in working in this field?
  – What positions will you be recruiting for and from which academic backgrounds?
  – Would I need more than an undergraduate degree for employment or advancement?

**Informational Interview** questions may be used when meeting exhibitors during Career Fairs

**Exhibitors Not Recruiting for Your Discipline?**

• **Feedback From Past Students/Alumni Who Have Attended:**
  – “There is no one here recruiting for my major or degree...”
  – “The only exhibitors here are for other degrees, not really mine...”
• If interested in an exhibitor that hasn’t listed your discipline, you can:
  – Still approach them and give your sales pitch.
  – Ask such questions as:
    • I know you’re here recruiting for ________, but do you hire individuals with my background?
• Would you be able to provide me with a contact within your organization who is better suited to address my background?
• What would you consider that I do to better enhance my chances of getting employed by your organization as I’m really interested in working for you?
• Listen carefully to others
• Be polite & turn off cell phones
• Thank organizations for their time
• Keep track of the exhibitors you spoke with
• If interested, ask if you can follow up

After: Follow Up
• Record / file the information provided for future reference
• Follow up with any contacts of interest that you have gathered by connecting via LinkedIn or gather business cards/contact info
• Send a follow up email/letter, LinkedIn message to those exhibitors you wish to pursue

Sample Follow Up Email/ Letter:

Hello [Name of Recruiter/Exhibitor],

Thanks again for the opportunity to meet you at the Career & Graduate School Fair on September 27th.

It was great learning about [detail from meeting], and I believe my [relevant, personal experience] would make me a great fit for [Company].

I would love to connect regarding a potential career with [Company] and look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Thanks again for your time!

Best,

[Your Name]

Takeaways:
• Notes about contacts you made & people you spoke with
• Information about organizations you have contacted
• Self-confidence when interacting with organization representatives
• A better sense of your career options
**Do’s for the Career Fair:**

**Do:**
- Be assertive, not rude
- Be aware of others waiting to speak with exhibitors
- Realize that exhibitors like to speak to small groups
- Dress appropriately
- Have copies of your resume on hand

**Don’ts for the Career Fair:**

**Don’t:**
- Wait for someone to approach you
- Ask obvious or redundant questions
- Ask about salary and benefits
- Monopolize someone’s time
- Have a lack of direction and focus
- Interrupt and then not listen
- Cruise the booths with a group of friends
- Carry your backpack, large purse, or other paraphernalia with you
- “Wing it” with employers
- Arrive during the last half hour of the event

**And Remember!**

Just be yourself and make the most out of the day! Be sincere and don’t come across as false... ...and sell yourself as only you know how to!

**Tidbits from Employers:**

- “(Students) need more practical experience. Theory is great but real life is somewhat different.”
  - Co-ops, internships, volunteer, summer job, MUCEP, etc...
- “Previous work experience is highly valued—they (graduates with work experience) are aware of the environment, pressures, and norms in an industry environment. They also have tangible hands-on skills that distinguish them from other students.”
- “Hires with previous work experience... bring a tool box to the table.”

**Career Tips and Resources:**

- [Meet Employers](#)
- [Career & Graduate School Fair](#)
- [Career Resources](#)
- [Interview Tips](#)
- [Memorial’s Online Record of Experience (MORE)](#)

For more information or to book an appointment with a Career Advisor, please email [careerdevelopment@mun.ca](mailto:careerdevelopment@mun.ca), visit UC 4002, or call (709) 864-2033.

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