



## Navigating a Job Fair

### Here's what typically happens at a job fair:

- Job seekers learn about some companies and determine which ones they want to “target” for follow up.
- Contacts are developed in an industry and companies; these become very useful in following up and personalizing your next steps.
- Job seekers ask for input on technical skills and knowledge needed for certain types of positions.

A job fair is also a great place to sharpen your job search skills through practice in presenting yourself.

### What are some tips for getting the most from a job fair?

1. Determine which companies are participating and create a plan for the ones in which you have the most interest. Know why you want to talk with them: to get information about their products or services, to apply for a position or to learn more about their industry. Prioritize class of companies 1,2,3 you want to visit. Prioritize within the class 1a,1b, 2a. Do not wait in long lines but rather go to the next preselected option and then come back when the line is shorter. Try to hit all of the vendors not on your priority list last; they may have a job for you.

2. While in line, listen to what the recruiter is saying to those in front of you. Often the recruiter will give the same presentation to everyone. Listening to those in front of you will help you prepare for what you are going to say to the recruiter when it is your turn. You will have the advantage of a few more minutes to prepare your questions and comments and make a better impression on the recruiter.

3. Be organized and look professional.

- Bring your resume with you, a pen and something to write on, carried in a folder or binder, where you can also store company information. If there are name tags, put the name tag on your right lapel.
- Make direct eye contact & use a firm handshake. Introduce yourself by name.
- Hand the recruiter your business card (if you have one) with your left hand as you shake with the right. • Give your “30 second pitch” (elevator speech) about who you are and what you could bring to the company. This is a brief summary of your strongest skills and experience in relation to the type of position you are seeking. Even though this is not a formal interview, you want to be remembered after the Job Fair.

4. Get the recruiter's business card and literature, then paper clip the information together. If an employer has a list of jobs, get a copy of the list.

- Make a notation on what "follow up" is required.
- Thank the recruiter for their time.
- Plan for what you will say when told to "just apply online" including:
  - If you did a lot of research on the company and made the effort to do a customized company specific cover letter and or resume, state that fact and ask the recruiter to take your customized cover letter and or resume back to the company with them. You will also apply on line as they have requested.
  - If you have not done the customized cover letter and or resume, make a strong effort to get the name of the recruiting manager and contact information, as you would like to customize the cover letter so that it is directed to the correct person.

Take time to regroup during the event and refocus. A Job Fair can be confusing and unproductive for job seekers who have no plan or don't take time to step out of the action when needed. Keep your enthusiasm, interest and energy strong as you go from one employer to another. Each employer booth is another opportunity to practice and learn.

Remember that a job fair is a place for employers and job seekers to "see what's out there." It is the experience of most people that the following are unlikely:

- You will be offered a position that day.
- You will be formally interviewed on the spot.
- An interview will be set up right then, with all the details in place.

Soon after the Job Fair:

- Follow-up by sending cover letter & resume showing interest in any position you discovered at the Job Fair.
- Use Kenton County Public Library resources to learn more about companies & formulate solid questions to ask in interviews. Get free KCPL library card at any library branch front desk today or apply online & use the website tonight <http://www.kentonlibrary.org/library-card>

Tip sheet: Tom Heilman, Job Search Focus Group, ([tomheilman50@gmail.com](mailto:tomheilman50@gmail.com)) Natalie Ruppert, Kenton County Public Library ([natalie.ruppert@kentonlibrary.org](mailto:natalie.ruppert@kentonlibrary.org)) , Angie Taylor, Taylor Career Strategies ([angie@taylorcareerstrategies.com](mailto:angie@taylorcareerstrategies.com))