Career Fairs: Are You Ready?

Do Your Research
- Find out which employers will attend the career fair.
- Visit HireABlazer for a list of campus job fairs and links to employer websites.
- Create your ABC list of employers you plan to talk with:
  - A = Wow—really interested.
  - B = Good opportunities
  - C = Not my 1st choice, but okay
- Talk with B and C list employers to practice your 30-second commercial
- Move on to A list employers and deliver your 30-second commercial with confidence

Leave Backpacks at Home
- They’re cumbersome
- They get in the way
- They scream “student,” not “candidate”

Participate in the Fair
Be prepared to talk with employers.
- Ask meaningful questions
- Develop and practice your 30-second commercial
- Ask recruiters for business cards for follow-up notes

Attire—Professional or Business Casual
Unsure? It is better to be overdressed. First impressions are important. Do some research on the job fair you plan to attend or the industry itself. A business suit is considered business professional. Business casual is a more relaxed yet structured atmosphere.
- Wear professional, yet comfortable shoes that fit you properly
- Wear professional, yet comfortable shoes that fit you properly

Stop, Look, & Listen
Listen to questions asked and answers received by other attendees. You might:
- Pick up valuable information
- See real-life career search “dos and don’ts”

Ask Questions Based on Your Goals
- Interested in a particular career field? Ask questions about working within the industry.
- Interested in opportunities with a specific employer? Ask questions about the application and interview process.
- Avoid asking “What does your company do?” You should know this from research you completed before the career fair.

You Need to Be on LinkedIn

“Professional Facebook”
- Primary tool for online professional networking.
- Not a place for social networking.
- Connects you to people, jobs, and opportunities.

Benefits
- Provides online professional presence.
- Houses electronic business card, resume, cover letter, and references all in one location.
- Increase the number of people in your network of contacts, including alumni.
- Access to job listings.
- Research companies or people you are going to meet using company profiles.

Build a Stellar Profile
- Profile Heading  Gives a short, memorable way to understand who you are in a professional context. Use 120 characters to make an employer want to read more. Ex: Recent UAB Honors grad seeking marketing position
- Appropriate Photo  A headshot, professional looking picture of just you.
- Show Off Your Education  Provide information about all institutions attended. Include majors or minors. Highlight your activities, including study abroad programs. If you have a strong GPA, share it.
- Professional Summary  Resembles your cover letter. Talk about your goals, qualifications, and experience. Emphasize unique skills. Present your summary in short blocks of text or bullet points for easy reading.
- Join Groups  Link to others with similar experience, interests, affiliations, or goals. Start with a university group. Other groups to add include volunteer organizations or professional associations you belong to. As a group member, you can find exclusive job listings and join discussions.
- Recommendations  Prove your work adds value and how you do your job. You can ask for recommendations from professors, internship coordinators, employers, and professional mentors. Your Profile will reach completion once you obtain recommendations. A more complete profile shows up in searches.
- LinkedIn URL  Increase the professional results that appear when people type your name into a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to “public” and claim a unique URL for your profile. Share this URL in your resume and email signature.

LinkedIn Connection Message
When connecting with someone on LinkedIn, always personalize the connection request. Give the person context for why you are asking them to be a connection. Never use the default message.

LinkedIn Student Jobs Portal
Access entry-level jobs and internships at some of the best companies worldwide at the student and recent grad job portal: http://www.linkedin.com/studentjobs

Sample Approach Email

Dear Mrs. Stewart-Hampton,
My friend Rusty Jones said to contact you about my interest in marketing research. I am a junior marketing major at UAB trying to learn more about the field.
Besides focusing on academics, I am also actively involved in the Student Government Association where I serve on the marketing committee and am a member of the basketball team.
I was hoping that you would have a few moments in the next week or two to discuss my career path, and share some knowledge on how to break into the marketing research field. You can contact me at 205-555-1111 or Noahill@uab.edu. Thank you for considering my request.
Sincerely,
Noah Hill