



Job Fairs

The thought of the Saint Vincent College Career Expo, WestPACS, WANT, PERC or any other job fair may conjure up visions of the gymnasium filled with recruiters collecting resumes, asking questions and assessing your interests and qualifications. This is an accurate description of most job fairs, whether recruiting for internships, full-time jobs or even graduate school. It can be intimidating while exciting at the same time! This is why it is crucial to be prepared so you can make the most of the day!!

Keep in mind that a job fair may not get you a job right away, but making contacts with employers and Alumni is sure to lead you in the right direction. The fair will give you an chance to gain confidence in the skills you have, gain a greater knowledge of what employers are looking for, enhance your networking abilities, and narrow the industries and opportunities to those that best fit with your education, interests, skills and abilities.

TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF A JOB FAIR IT IS RECOMMENDED:

1. PRIOR TO THE FAIR

Prepare your Resume

- If you need assistance in preparing a resume, attend resume workshops and use the examples found in the Career Guide. Once you've started, meet with a Career Center professional to 'fine tune' your resume.
- Make more than enough copies of your resume. If you have more than one version, be sure to bring enough of each (it is best to bring more than enough of each in case of last minute additions to the employer directory).

Research the Employer

- Identify employers you would like to meet and make notes regarding each employer (reviewing comments the day of the fair).
- Research company websites; connect with friends or Alumni already working at the organization. Check with the Career Center or read the Vault Guides to gain a better understanding of the employer.
- Try to ask questions based on what you have already learned about the employer. For example, ask the employer to clarify something you specifically read or have them expand upon something they discussed previously. The question could be specific or general to the industry. For example and education major may ask "*How is the stimulus package affecting education?*" Or more specifically, one may ask questions based on information taken directly from the school's annual report.

Research Yourself

- Review your resume, experiences, career goals, and transferable skills.
- Practice discussing your qualifications and goals with the employer.
- Consider where you want to work geographically, what you like doing, and what you're looking for in an internship or full-time position.
- Prepare a 30-60 second 'commercial' (Practice in front of a mirror or with friends and family to make sure you are confident about your commercial).

2. THE DAY OF THE FAIR

Arrive at the Fair

- Arrive at check-in and obtain an updated list of employers and job fair literature.
- Budget your time. Explore the job fair layout and map-out your strategy.

Meet the Employer

- Always visit your target companies (top 10-20 choices) first, work later toward other interests.
- Some lines may be extremely long. If this is the case, make contact with other employers and come back to the employer when the line of job seekers has subsided.
- Approach employers on an individual basis, not in the company of your friends.
- Smile, offer a firm handshake and introduce yourself to the employer.
- Offer your resume and present your 30-60 second commercial.
- Talk to the employer about your job interests.
- Ask questions about the positions and the organization.
- Take ALL literature presented to you by the employer.
- Complete an application if asked by the employer.
- Learn the next step in the interviewing process and ask the employer for a business card.
- Thank the employer and offer a handshake.
- After leaving the booth, take notes about your conversation with the employer.

3. AFTER THE FAIR

Follow-up

- Gather all information and business cards collected at the event.
- 3-5 days after event, write or email a follow-up thank you letter expressing your gratitude and your interest in the position and company.
- Add all contacts to your list of 'networks'.

Keep Records

- Assess interactions with employers and decide which positions may or may not interest you.
- Create a spreadsheet as a guideline keeping important notes about the employer, the interactions and the next step in the process.