

HOW to PREPARE for a Career/Internship/Job Fair

Showing up at any Career Fair un-prepared will not be an effective way to find a job or internship opportunity! Employers will expect you to act and look professional, and that you have researched their company.

1. **A resume' is required!**
2. You **MUST research the employers** - each Fair has a website!
 - See Fair websites at www.mayvillestate.edu/careers >"Events and Seminars", and under Career Events in the *Mayville State Jobs Network*
 - UND and NDSU use the *Career Fair Plus* app, so download to your device!
3. Learn what to expect, **how to dress**, what to say, what to do at a Fair:
 - go to www.mayvillestate.edu/careers
 - click "Job Search Tools-All Majors", then "Career Fair Planning".
 - **Watch videos:** ...including "**Career Fair Success**", "**The Elevator Pitch**", and "**Importance of Networking**"
 - Also watch related videos under "Interview-Before", "Interview Dress", "Interview-During", "Interview-After"

DO . . .

Bring:

- Plastic or leather 'portfolio' w/writing pad and pen
- 10-20 Resumes in that portfolio, plus notes from your research
- Your resume` (pdf & word) on your phone and in the cloud
- Your Student ID and money for parking, food, etc
- Your best SMILE and ATTITUDE! **BE ENTHUSIASTIC!!**

PREPARE

- Know what you are looking for and know how to express that!
 - Internship; or fulltime; or just gathering information for future
 - **Specific position or functional company area** (marketing, HR, etc)
- **Research . . . research . . . research the employers that will be attending**
 - **Use the Career Fair mobile apps and websites**
- **Develop a "priority" list of the employers you will want to contact**
 - For example, you may have a list of your "top ten" prospects, along with your top 5, and maybe top 3. This list will make your time at the Fair extremely efficient!
- Prepare questions you want to ask each employer
 - Employers WILL expect that you have researched their company, so your questions should not just "regurgitate" what you found on their website
- Make sure your resume looks professional! *See Career Services for help with this.*
 - It's ok (and may be a real plus) to "customize" your resume for a couple of your "hot prospects", it is also ok to have a generic resume that "fits all"
 - Customized or not, your resume objective or summary needs to give the employers some idea of what type of position you are seeking ("A summer internship related to marketing"; "A fulltime position in Human Resources")
- Plan what you will wear! "Business Professional" is the common style. That means no jeans and t-shirts! Men: tie, dress shirt and slacks . . . sport-coats or suits are common. Women: wear 'fancy pants' and a nice top, or consider purchasing a business suit; **PLEASE avoid low-cut tops and extreme heels.**
- Pre-plan your travel route and where to park.
- Arrive ON TIME!! The smart student will be at the Fair when it opens (*you could be the first student they see ... make a great impression, and you've "set the bar" for others*)

- When you arrive, check in at registration table; pick up their map/employer list; map out your route to meet your priority list of employers in the most efficient manner. The mobile apps include a map.

DO . . .

COMMUNICATE

- As you approach an employer, offer a firm handshake, SMILE, and present your ‘commercial’.
 - Prior to the Fair, develop a one-minute or less “commercial” or “elevator speech” that will be your opening statement to each employer (may be customized for each employer). Your commercial can introduce yourself and tell them why you are interested in their company; it could introduce yourself and your major, and type of job or internship you are seeking.
- PRACTICE your introduction! PRACTICE your firm handshake and SMILE!
- Remember . . . employers place a high priority on hiring candidates with strong communication skills!

FOLLOW UP

- Get the employer/recruiter’s business card or at least the appropriate contact information
- Ask the recruiter how to follow up. Expect them to refer you to their website.
- Do e-mail or mail a brief thank you within a few days.

DON’T . . .

- Don’t cruise the booths with a friend or group of friends. Approaching an employer as a group sends the message that none of you are confident in yourself or your skills.
- Don’t spend most of your time picking up freebies and give-aways. After you have met with your priority list of employers, and don’t have additional employers to talk to, then it will be ok to gather up some of the goodies. Remember, always ask yourself ... WWaPD (What Would a Professional Do)?
- Do not carry a briefcase or backpack into the Fair. KEEP IT SIMPLE! Purchase an inexpensive leather or plastic ‘portfolio’ that has a pad of paper in it. Use the portfolio to hold your resumes and research notes ... and to take notes. Make sure you have a good pen(s)!
- Don’t dress like you are going to a football game! DRESS PROFESSIONALLY!
- Don’t plan on just winging it with each employer. PREPARE through research, and PREPARE your 1 minute commercial.
- Don’t wait until the last hour of the Fair to show up! By that time, employers are tired, and just want to get packed up to leave. BE SMART . . . always arrive early at the Fair!