Making the Most of Career Fairs

1. Have a well-written resume. Check out our industry-specific samples in the Resources section of Handshake.

2. Learn about the organizations attending the career fair. Pick your top 5 – 10 employers, gain background information about them, and plan to approach these organizations first. Check out this video for tips.

3. Know what kind of job or internship you want and be able to express it. Prepare a 30 second introduction. Introduce yourself in a positive and confident manner and offer a firm handshake. Include your name, major, and year of graduation. Give your resume to the representative and be ready to discuss your background, qualifications, and career goals.

4. Find out the name and title of the representative. Make sure you obtain the representative’s business card so you can follow up with a thank you e-mail or note after the event.

5. Dress appropriately. Wear professional attire, and dress as you would for a job interview. Research your industry standards. You want to present the best image possible - jeans, t-shirts, sweatshirts, sneakers, hats, short skirts, and tank/low-cut tops won’t cut it. If possible, leave your backpack and coat in your room or car. You will have only a few minutes to make a positive first impression!

6. Allow yourself plenty of time. Arrive early and map out your strategy. Do not hurry through the fair because you will need adequate time to speak to the various employers. We suggest that you arrive during the first hour of the fair, if possible, because the representatives will be more energized earlier in the event.

7. Ask questions. Use the Career Fair as an opportunity to ask questions about the organizations and their anticipated openings. Asking questions will help you decide if each organization is the right fit for you. Some questions might be: What are common career paths within your organization? What skills and/or personal qualities are necessary to succeed in this career? This is one of the few chances you will have to speak face-to-face with representatives of these organizations, so take advantage of it!

8. Make notes as you leave each organization. Be sure to bring a pen and paper to the fair so that you can write down your initial thoughts about the employer. Taking notes will allow you to easily remember the different organizations if you get a phone call from them.

9. Follow up. After the Career Fair, make it a point to send a thank you e-mail and attach a copy of your resume. In your letter, thank the representative for coming to the fair and reiterate your interest in the organization and position.

10. Be prepared for an interview within a short period of time. You never know when you could get a phone call from an employer. It could be the very next day or six months later! Start getting ready for the interview process by scheduling a practice interview with your specialized career coach.

11. Utilize additional job and internship search strategies. Make an appointment with your specialized career coach to learn additional strategies for finding a job or internship in your specific field of interest. Our services are designed to assist students of all majors and career interests, and include online job and internship postings on Handshake, career related programs and workshops, alumni networking contacts and much more!

Contact the Office of Career & Professional Development if you have any questions. You may reach us at careerdevelopment@belmont.edu or 615-460-6490. We are located in Gabhart Student Center 218 and look forward to seeing you soon!