

# CAREER CORNER

Issue 8

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## Attending Career Fairs

October seems to be one of the main fall months for recruiting, so it seems fitting that our newsletter focus on the advantages of attending Career Fairs, how to prepare, and how to make yourself stand out.

### Why should you attend?

Career Fairs offer a convenient way to network and make first impressions with representatives while learning about numerous companies in one location. By attending, you are able to obtain job leads and insight on next steps in the application process.

### What should you expect?

For students who have never been to a Career Fair, it can be daunting when you don't know what to expect. At larger fairs, there might be close to 100 employers in one large facility situated next to one another at company

booths. When you arrive at the fair, you will likely be asked to sign in, where you will receive an employer guidebook or map to see where each company is located. It's a good idea to take a few minutes and map out a strategy of how you will approach recruiters in the room. Generally, you can research who will be there prior to the event by looking on the fair's website or by going to your Career Services office.

Your best bet is to plan on arriving early, dress professionally, and allow yourself plenty of time to meet with the employers you're interested in. Remember, there will be hundreds of other candidates attending, so it's important to know what to expect and prepare accordingly.



### Quick Tips for Career Fair Success, *taken from Job Choices magazine*

- Plan ahead: Rank the organizations attending so you can visit those of most interest first; work your way through your list as you have time.
- Dress as if it were an interview.
- Prepare a short "commercial" that you can use when you introduce yourself to recruiters.
- Come prepared with paper copies of your resumes, but also load your resume onto a thumb drive so that it can be transferred to a recruiter's laptop, if possible.
- Focus on the organizations and their opportunities-not their giveaways.
- Display a professional attitude, and be unfailingly polite.
- Listen to what the recruiter has to say.
- Be respectful of the recruiter's time.
- Ask recruiters about next steps.
- Get recruiters' business cards, and jot down pertinent notes on them so you can follow up.
- Send a thank-you note or e-mail to each recruiter you met with at the career fair.



## How to Prepare

### Researching employers:

Whenever possible, research ahead of time which employers will be coming to the fair and what positions they are seeking to fill. You can often obtain this information from a Career Fair's main website or from the Career Services office. Carefully read through the employers, research options that are a fit with your interests and skills, and come up with your own list of those companies that you're interested in speaking with. Then, make notes of things you want to be sure and talk about with representatives of each organization as well as questions to ask.

### Polished Resumes:

Have an error-free resume, printed on quality paper, that reflects how your experiences fit the needs of a certain job/industry. Print enough copies to account for all the employers you'd plan to speak with, plus an additional 5-10 just to be sure. It's always a good idea to have your document critiqued by Career Services!

### Dressing for success:

Treat a Career Fair like an interview! Be professionally dressed, preferably in a business suit and dress shoes. Pay attention to the details of your appearance. Be immaculately groomed, carry a tote bag or briefcase to keep company literature in, and have your resumes neatly kept in a portfolio or binder.

# Approaching a Recruiter

When approaching a recruiter, you must be able to quickly sell your past experiences and qualifications so that they will know you can handle the responsibilities of their position. You need to present yourself in a professional manner that will grab their attention and make them want to invite you in for an interview to learn more. To help accomplish this, start by preparing a solid 30-Second Commercial, in advance, so that you can feel confident at the fair and not get distracted by other candidates around you.

Giving a solid introduction of yourself that includes well-articulated characteristics and experiences from your past is easier said than done. However, if you craft yours around a few basic components, your commercial can be an excellent starting point for a conversation with a recruiter.



## Components of an introduction:

1. *The Basics:* Who are you? Name, class, major, etc
2. *The Purpose:* What are you looking for?
3. *Your Background/Achievements:* What can you offer?
4. *Your Hook:* What makes you different?
5. *Your Knowledge:* What do you know about the company/industry?

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## After the Fair

### Follow-up with recruiters:

Once the fair is over, immediately follow-up with each recruiter you met with by sending a thank-you note or e-mail. Express your appreciation for their time, reiterate your interest in the company, and let them know if you have done what they asked you to do (such as applying online). Even if the company is not currently hiring for a position you're hoping for, it's still a good idea to send a follow-up note to stay in contact.

### Prepare for the next steps:

If the recruiter told you to do something specific, such as apply online or contact someone else, do so immediately. If you are asked to come in for an interview, be sure that you are well-prepared. Research the company more in-depth and attend our Interviewing workshops or meet with Career Services staff individually for assistance.



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## Staying in FOCUS for the fair

By: Rachel Leer

Think you want to be a financial planner, a sport psychologist, an audio technician? Do you have the right qualifications and skills for the job you want? Does the job fit your personality and salary expectations?

Figuring out what you want to be when you "grow up" can be a daunting task. Fortunately, Career Services offers a variety of resources to help you become more knowledgeable about careers that interest you. For example, FOCUS-2, an online assessment and guidance tool, can help you "Explore the Possibilities" of more than 1200 occupations.



**Here's how it works:** Visit [www.lvc.edu/career-services](http://www.lvc.edu/career-services) and click on the FOCUS link on the left. If you haven't already created an account, use the access code: *collegecenter*, to create one. The home page of FOCUS-2 lists four different sections for assessment and exploration: Career Readiness, Self Assessment, Explore the Possibilities, and a Personal Portfolio. The

Explore the Possibilities section allows you to research specific careers. Here, questions about required skills, job outlook, salary, duties, and working conditions can be answered.

This is a valuable tool for anyone heading to a Career Fair. Knowledge is power; knowing which jobs interest you, which ones you are qualified for, and what each job entails is invaluable. Going to a Career Fair armed with this knowledge is sure to let prospective employers know you mean business. So, go forth and FOCUS!

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## for more help preparing for Career Fairs:

Email: [careerservices@lvc.edu](mailto:careerservices@lvc.edu)

<http://blogs.lvc.edu/career/>

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