

CAREER FAIR TIPS AND TRICKS

HERE ARE 4 TIPS ON HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE UPCOMING GENERAL AND STEM CAREER FAIRS.

1. DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Recruiters roll their eyes when you walk up to their booth and say, "Hi, what does your company do?" Avoid a terrible first impression and research the company before the career fair so you know the basic facts (history, public image, financial info, locations, etc.). Not only that, but dig a little deeper so that you have a good idea how your major and experience could fit with that company. If you can talk intelligently about a problem the company is facing and how you can help solve it you're almost guaranteed an interview.

2. PRACTICE YOUR PITCH

Walking up to a booth without a plan and winging the conversation isn't going to get you very far. Come up with a 30-second pitch about yourself that you can use once you've broken the ice with some small talk. Here's a formula you can use to make it:

- **Present:** Briefly explain what you're studying and what year you are, and maybe a big project or assignment that you're currently working on.
- **Past:** Talk about why you chose the major you did, a previous internship, or a past project that shows off your skills.
- **Future:** Discuss your future plans such as what industries you're interested in, what kind of jobs you're pursuing, or what problems you'd like to solve.
- **Open Question:** End your pitch with an open-ended question to the recruiter that will ensure the conversation keeps flowing. You could ask for more information about the company, something specific about a job opening, or details about the recruiter's career path that led them to the company.

Remember to keep it under 30 seconds, recruiters don't want to spend 15 minutes hearing about the first time you saw a computer and instantly knew that Information Systems was your God-given calling. And whatever you do, don't launch into your pitch like a cold calling, telemarketing robot. Break the ice with some small talk, and wait for a natural pause in the conversation before you tell them your story.

3. SET GOALS

Talking with recruiters can be exhausting, and it can be tempting to go home especially if a conversation doesn't go as well as you were hoping. Set some goals to keep yourself accountable and to give you a light at the end of the tunnel. Here are a few example goals:

- Number of recruiters you want to interact with
- Number of resume's you want handout
- Number of quality conversations (note: asking for swag is not a quality conversation)
- Number of business cards you want to collect
- Number of breaks you can take

In addition to setting goals, bring a friend that can act as your networking wingman/wing woman. They can help fill in those awkward pauses, and challenge you if you start to give up on your goals.

4. FOLLOW UP

After the fair, find the recruiters you spoke with on LinkedIn and send them a personalized connection request. Try to include a specific detail from your conversation that will help them remember you. Depending on how active they are on LinkedIn you can also send them an email to make sure they see how interested you are.