



# Career Fair Tips for Recruiters

---

USC students may behave much like any typical student attending a Career Fair. They may wander around with a friend for awhile before deciding to leave. They may peer suspiciously at your display before deciding whether to approach or not. They may even feel intimidated and nervous about starting a conversation with a stranger. The USC Career Center works hard to help students get the most out of a Career Fair, but you as the organizational representative can also do a great deal to generate interest in your organization and facilitate meaningful interactions with students. The following tips may help you to have a successful overall college Career Fair experience:

## PREPARING

- Know what your goal is for attending the fair and design your entire effort around that aim.  
*For example are you: Recruiting students for full time, part time or internship positions?  
Sharing personal career experience and typical steps to success?  
Introducing a new program or service your organization sponsors?  
Enhancing your organization image and name recognition?*
- Anticipate problems before the event and be prepared for anything (i.e. bad weather, heavy traffic, distance from parking to facility, malfunctioning electrical equipment, the need for extension cords).
- Take advantage of early set up times - often the best and most motivated students are the first in the door and you don't want to still be setting up your display when they walk by.

## DISPLAY

- Entertaining exhibits grab attention and get results. Students live a colorful world of multimedia.
- Your visual message should give even a casual observer a clear idea of what your organization does.
- 60% of a person's initial reaction is based on color - 80% choose blue as their favorite.  
*Blue = low key & low stress                      Yellow = #1 attention grabber  
Red = high energy                                      Green = comforting (unless khaki)  
Orange = cheap / inexpensive                      Metallic = premium / pricey  
Black = power    White = good guy*
- Remember that while a good exhibit may get students to your table, it is simply a stage for information exchange and you are the focus, not your exhibit. Students will remember you more than your display.

## LITERATURE

- Have brochures on hand, but keep paper to a minimum. You can use handouts to initiate a conversation with students, but it should not be your entire presentation.
- Think about what kind of information you would have wanted or needed on a handout as a student (as a freshman, as a sophomore and so on) and design your handout(s) accordingly.  
*For example, consider handouts on: Organizational statistics, mission, client base, etc.  
Internship or co-op opportunities  
Summer or part time employment  
Full time career paths / Trainee programs  
Benefits*

(OVER)

## **DEMONSTRATIONS**

- 75% of Career Fair attendees want to see more demonstrations.
- Keep demonstrations short and simple, ideally 3-5 minutes.
- Students tend to remember what they visualize and participate in, rather than what they hear.

## **MULTIMEDIA**

- Taped presentations should be no more than 5-10 minutes long. Many students see a Career Fair as a buffet - they want to explore all their options before getting more in-depth information.

## **EXHIBIT STAFF**

- Make a good first impression - students will primarily base their opinion of your organization on YOU!
- Staff should be knowledgeable; know yourself, your position, your organizational structure, training programs, benefits and where students may fit into that entire scheme.
- Wear nametags prominently - we recommend that students try to get your name and title.
- Bring plenty of business cards.
- Take notes on the back of students' resumes that can help you to later recall your conversations with them. Consider ranking students ("A", "B", "C" etc.) and follow up immediately on all "A" candidates.
- Students may be "long-term" leads. Don't expect an immediate sell. A "hard sale" may turn them off.
- Visitors prefer a short overall view of what you have to offer.
- Avoid eating at your exhibit. It takes away from the professional look. (Drinks are okay.)
- Stand; don't sit at your exhibit. Sitting in the chair behind your exhibit doesn't connote a sense of enthusiasm or a welcoming atmosphere.
- Ensure your exhibit is staffed at all times. If you are absent it sends the message that you don't care.
- Don't break down your exhibit early because the crowd has started to thin. Some of the best and brightest students might not make the event until the end simply due to scheduling conflicts.
- Visit other exhibitors when your shift ends. It's a great way to meet other professionals in your field.

## **QUESTIONS**

- Don't wait for visitors to approach you - be friendly, assertive and sincere.
- Remember that students may be nervous and reserved about initiating conversation. Ask a passerby friendly, open-ended, yet specific questions such as "Are you interested in a career in finance?" or (when you see them looking at your table) "Can I tell you a little bit about XYZ company?"
- Students are comfortable talking about their academic experience; ask them their major, their favorite class and then lead into questions about their work experience and career ambitions.

## **SURVIVAL**

- Wear comfortable shoes.
- Take brief, brisk walks to keep your feet and back from hurting - visit the refreshment table often!
- Negotiate for peace with neighbors that have noisy presentations - make it a win-win situation.

## **AFTER THE FAIR**

- Leave a packet of organizational information for the Career Center to place in their Career Library.
- Respond to all inquiries personally as soon as possible to reinforce your good image and to "strike while the iron is still hot!"