

How to Work a Career Fair



Friday, October 3, 2008

Agenda

- Purpose of a Career Fair
- Preparing for the Career Fair
- Things NOT to Do at a Career Fair
- How to Make a Good First Impression
- The Closing
- After the Career Fair: Next Steps
- The Elevator Pitch
- Break Out Exercise
- Questions?



Purpose of a Career Fair

- Opportunity to job search and secure interviews
- Networking opportunity
 - ◆ A way to start exploring career options
 - ◆ Never too early to explore summer internship opportunities!
 - ◆ Get comfortable meeting prospective employers



Preparing for the Career Fair

- Get a list of the companies attending and hiring requirements from CDO website:
www.bu.edu/eng/careers
- Make your own list of companies YOU want to see at the career fair
- Research your top companies via company websites, eRecruiting

Preparing for the Career Fair (Cont)

- Prepare your resume
 - ◆ If you have not already, come into the CDO to get your resume reviewed!

- Practice your “elevator pitch”

- Create a few solid questions to ask employer representatives



Things NOT To Do at a Career Fair

- Don't cruise the booths with a group of friends, make your own positive impression
- Don't come dressed casually
- Don't "wing it" with an employer; do your homework!
- Don't come during the last half hour of the event – if you come late, you may miss the organizations you wanted to contact
- Don't say, "I'm flexible – I just want to get some experience."



How to Make a Good First Impression

- Convey enthusiasm to employers
 - ◆ Do your research!
- Maintain eye contact
- Don't lie or overly embellish
- Speak confidently and clearly
- Respect personal space
- Turn cell phone off

The Closing

- Ask for a business card
- Understand what the next steps are:
 - ◆ What will happen to my resume?
 - ◆ Who are the right contacts to follow up with?
 - ◆ What is the timeframe of when I should expect to hear back on the status of my application?
- Leave on a positive note with a firm handshake



After the Career Fair: Next Steps

- Review your conversations and what you learned from employers
- Organize business cards and other company related materials
- Send a thank you note to employers whose contact information you have
 - ◆ Be sure to reference specifics from your conversations
 - ◆ Convey enthusiasm and interest in any open positions and about the company



The Elevator Pitch

- Approach an available company representative (don't wait for them to seek you out)
- Start with a smile and a firm handshake
- Example of an abbreviated pitch:
 - ◆ “Hi, my name is _____. I am a senior majoring in Biomedical Engineering, graduating in May. I'm interested in full-time post graduate opportunities in the Medical Devices industry. I am hoping to work for a company like Medtronic that is dedicated to creating devices that treat and alleviate the negative effects of chronic illness.”



The Elevator Pitch (Cont)

- Distinguish yourself from others when talking to employer representatives
 - ◆ Talk about relevant course projects
 - Ex: Senior Design Projects
 - ◆ Work experience
 - Give concrete examples
 - ◆ Additional differentiating characteristics
 - Any technical skills worth mentioning
 - Leadership roles
 - Study Abroad



Break Out Exercise

- Get into groups of two
- You and your partner will practice your “elevator pitch” together
 - ◆ Take turns being the candidate and the employer representative
 - ◆ Then give each other feedback on what you liked about their pitch and what they could improve
- We will then come back as a group and discuss

QUESTIONS?



Want More Help?

Come visit us during walk-in hours at
the Career Development Office:
44 Cummington Street
Room 112

OR

Call for an appointment
617-353-5731