

# Career Fair Strategy

## *To make your mark, show some spark!*

It's career fair season. Savor the chance to bypass computer screeners and bond with recruiters in person. To make your mark, you need to show some spark.

### Here's a Strategy for Career Fair Success:

#### 1. Do your homework.

Take the list of employers who will be at the career fair and research:

- Products or services
- Leadership and board of directors
- Outside news reports and inside press releases
- Alumni from your college who work there (find on *LinkedIn*)

#### 2. Dress for an interview.

Don't dress like an undergrad in shorts and sweatshirt or "messy bun" hairdo. Dress like a professional going to an interview. It's easier to turn off recruiters by being underdressed than overdressed.

#### 3. Approach employers with enthusiasm.

Don't hang back and stare at recruiters like they are animals in a zoo. They can smell your indecision from 20 feet away. Select companies to visit before you go. Approach each one with confidence and introduce yourself. Give a firm handshake to say, "Hello," and again to say, "Goodbye." Be more attentive to the recruiters than to your cell phone.

#### 4. Ask questions.

Sure, you want to talk about your good qualities. But if you want employers to be excited about you, be excited about them. Ask questions about products or services and recent news about the organization. Ask recruiters, "What do you like best about your organization?"

#### 5. Follow up.

Career fairs are the beginning of the relationship. Send an email and a typed-written letter by postal mail: "Thank you for speaking with me... Here's what I like about your organization... I'm very interested in joining your team..." Connect with recruiters or fellow-alumni on *LinkedIn*.

## If you want it, go get it!

### **The Exceptional Professional: What You Need to Know to Grow Your Career**

by Callista Gould is an entertaining read full of true stories of professional triumphs and disasters, with practical advice on how to navigate your career. Find it on Amazon.com or [www.cultureandmanners.com](http://www.cultureandmanners.com).

Callista Gould, author and speaker on Professionalism with the Culture and Manners Institute, gives etiquette dining tutorials and other seminars. Find out more on: [www.cultureandmanners.com](http://www.cultureandmanners.com) or contact Callista at: [cgould@cultureandmanners.com](mailto:cgould@cultureandmanners.com)  
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