

HOW TO ROCK A CAREER FAIR



It's Career Fair season, and it's always a good idea to brush up on your skills for making your visit successful. Here are some tips to help you maximize your time at a career fair.

Do: Get your resume ready in advance. Make sure it's clean and error-free (ask a friend to help.) Looking for more than one kind of position? Have another version of your resume ready that targets other jobs and highlights different skills and experience.

Do: Arrive early. The recruiters are fresh at the beginning of the event, and the crowds will be thinner. You'll have more time available to spend with a recruiter, and you'll stand out as a more memorable candidate. Late in the day, recruiters are tired, and many are thinking about packing up early. It will be hard to make a connection if you show up in the last half hour or so of an event.

Do: Engage the recruiters. Remember, they are there for the express purpose of meeting you. They assume you're there for the same purpose – to make contact with companies that may need your skills. If you're shy, this is a great place to work on getting over it!

Many jobseekers come off as painfully timid. They slink down the center of the aisle, just out of range of a recruiter's personal space. Offering a confident smile and firm handshake will stand out in the crowd and open up possibilities.

Do: Have your "elevator speech" ready.

You should be able to state who you are and what you're looking for in the time it takes to go from the ground floor to your office floor (hence the name "elevator speech.") At a job fair, you should be able to tell the recruiter what you're looking for in less than 30 seconds. "Good morning. I'm John Smith, and I have 10 years of customer service experience in a technical support environment. Are you recruiting for Customer Service Reps today?"

Do: Ask questions. If you're not sure how to break the ice with a recruiter, ask about their company or industry – even a simple question like "What kind of products do you manufacture?" helps you understand how your skills might fit into what the company needs. Ask about how your experience might differ from working at their company. ("I have worked for several years in processing home mortgages; how would a consumer finance company's procedures differ?") Be prepared to answer questions, too – the recruiter is there to get to know you, after all.



CAREERSOURCE NORTHEAST FLORIDA LOCATIONS

CareerSource NEFL has Career and Business Services locations throughout the six-county area. These include:

CareerSource Northeast Florida Career Centers

Baker County

1184 South 6th Street
Macclenny, FL 32063
Phone: (904) 259-9309
Fax: (904) 259-7702

Nassau County

96042 Lofton Square Court
Yulee, FL 32097
Phone: (904) 432-0009
Fax: (904) 277-7219

Clay County

1845 Town Center Blvd.,
Suite 150
Fleming Island, FL 32003
Phone: (904) 213-3888
Fax: (904) 278-5696

Putnam County

400 Highway 19 North, Suite 53
Palatka, FL 32177
Phone: (386) 530-7089
Fax: (386) 682-3150

Duval County

Gateway
5000 Norwood Avenue,
Suite 2
Jacksonville, FL 32208
Phone: (904) 924-1710
Fax: (904) 924-1725

St. Johns County

525 State Road 16, Suite 109
St. Augustine, FL 32084
Phone: (904) 819-0231
Fax: (904) 516-9211

Southside

11268 Beach Blvd.,
Jacksonville, FL 32246
Phone: (904) 997-3100
Fax (904) 425-6450

Welfare Transition and SNAP Service Center

5000 Norwood Avenue,
Suite 2
Jacksonville, FL 32208
TANF (904) 213-3900
SNAP (904) 798-9230
Fax: (904) 892-8272

Do: Dress and conduct yourself as though you were at an interview.

First impressions really count when you're trying to get noticed in a crowd of hundreds of people. Be aware of your language and conduct even when not speaking to a recruiter directly; the recruiters may have been noticing you for several minutes before you actually approach their booth.

Do: Watch the recruiter's body language carefully.

When you notice her trying to disengage, close your conversation quickly and gracefully. Ask about how to follow up with the company and make a quick exit. Recruiters hope to meet many job-seekers at each event, and you can make their jobs easier by reading the signs and helping them move on to the next applicant.

Keeping these tips in mind will help you connect more effectively with recruiters at the many events this year. Your next career move may be just a handshake away.



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