

**LEARN TO WORK A JOB FAIR
BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER**

BEFORE

1. Bring **multiple copies of your resume** to hand out to employers you visit. Be ready to discuss your skills, accomplishments and experience without reading from your resume. Your resume should be error-free, concise and graphically attractive.
2. **Make mini resume:** You can buy blank business cards at stores like Office Depot or Staples and personalize them with your name, contact information, a brief summary of your experience and skills, and the type of job you are seeking. If an employer does not want a copy of your resume, he/she might be willing to take your business card. Most importantly, having a mini resume will set you apart from other job seekers. See pages 4 and 5 for information on writing a mini resume.
3. **Research the organizations attending the job fair.** Nothing impresses an employer less than a job seeker asking, "So what do you guys do?" Go to the company's web page and write down a few key points about their mission or product, history, how they describe themselves, and their current openings. Mention your research while you are at their table. The more informed you are, the more likely you will be positively remembered. HCC's Counseling and Career Services web page lists the employers registered for the job fair about one month in advance. Go to www.howardcc.edu/counseling (Job fair link)
4. **Do a skills analysis worksheet for the positions they have open that match your target positions.** See the attached samples.
5. **After you have done your research, rank order the employers** in the order of your interest. If a company interests you but they are not recruiting for your specialty, you can still go to their table and ask for the name of the proper contact at the organization.
6. **Prepare a 30-second "job fair commercial" and practice repeating it.** When you approach each recruiter, you'll need to be prepared to summarize quickly who you are, why you are interested in the company, and what you can do for them, and why they should hire you. Keep a conversational tone to your commercial and allow the recruiter to give you feedback about the position. Do not include personal information such as age, birthplace or religion. Practice your commercial with a career counselor or friend. See page 6 for sample commercials.
7. **Dress in professional attire as you would for an interview.** Men should wear a dark suit, matching tie, a pressed shirt, and polished shoes. Women should wear an interview suit or a formal pants suit. Avoid heavy makeup or larger jewelry. Both men and women should have clean and combed/brushed hair and avoid strong perfume or cologne. Pay attention to your shoes – studies suggest that employers notice unpolished shoes, regardless as to how nice the clothes you are wearing.
8. **Use a leather or vinyl portfolio** to carry your resume and to take notes. Do not use a backpack or a large briefcase.
9. **Be ready to interview.** Some job fairs have interview rooms where employers can take job seekers whom they want to consider further. Do a mock interview with a career counselor or friend ahead of time.

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DURING

1. **Get a floor plan map** -- usually at the entrance or information table. Plan a route to move around the floor quickly, visiting your companies of interest.
2. **Visit a company you are not interested in first to practice introducing yourself.** Doing so will help you help you gather your composure and practice your 30-second commercial so you can be ready and confident to meet your favorite employers. Do not approach your “dream employer” until you are completely ready.
3. **Introduce yourself and shake hands:** In many ways, a job fair is a test of your social skills. When approaching a recruiter extend your hand, smile, and introduce yourself. Recruiters are usually friendly and outgoing, and they will expect the same of you. Do not hang out in groups; the job fair is not a team activity.
4. **Ask intelligent questions:** Based on your research you might have some questions to ask the employer. You can refer to your written notes to make sure you ask all your questions, but do not take notes while talking to the employer. Step away from the table and take notes on your conversation.
5. **Do NOT ask about benefits or salary ranges.** Your job is to communicate what you can do for them, not what they can do for you. Asking too many “me-focused” questions leaves a bad impression.
6. **Offer your resume and/or mini resume and ask recruiters for their card and if you may follow up with them in a few days.** If they are not recruiting for your specialty, ask for the name of the proper contact at the organization.
7. **Be prepared to stand in line.** Yes, sometimes lines can be long, but remember that this is a networking event. Talk to others in line and share information. You never know whom you will meet.
8. **If the fair ends at 4:00 don't show up at 3:30 if you can help it.** Recruiters are notorious for leaving early.
9. **Don't “hog” the recruiter's time.** Once the recruiter is finished talking with you, move on.
10. **Be positive and upbeat.** People want to hire pleasant people who will represent the organization well.
11. **Don't be discouraged** if you don't go home with a job offer or formal interview lined up. Job fairs are one-step in your research and networking process.

AFTER

1. **Follow up.** The employers will be meeting many people during the job fair and might not remember you when they return to their office. Use the business cards and literature you collected and fire off a targeted cover letter and another copy of your resume to the recruiter. Indicate you met them at the

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fair and are very interested in the organization. Mention specific reasons why you would be an asset to the organization and why you are qualified for the opening. Most job seekers fail to take this simple step, often losing out in the end to those who took the time to express thanks. Do not wait for the recruiter to contact you; you need to follow up in order to get the job.

2. **Contact them anyway.** If you like the organization but not the jobs they were promoting, it's still worth a try to follow up to get further company contacts for the type of position you want.
3. **Be ready for a call!** Make sure your answering machine works and that you are ready to interview. Your answering machine recording should be professional in nature without background noise or music.
4. **Contact Counseling and Career Services for more help.** Career counselors are available to assist you with preparing for the job fair or any other aspect of your job search. Call (410) 772-4840 or visit the office in room 302 of the RCF building to make an appointment.

FINAL NOTE

Seasoned job fair recruiters often rank the candidates they meet based on first impressions (grooming, attitude, professionalism, resume quality, intelligent questions, etc.) They also often mark notations on resumes. Your goal is to get in the "good" pile. With proper preparation, you increase your chances enormously.

(adapted from information by Peter Vogt, MonsterTRAK Career Coach)

You Tube video on attending a job fair: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmPsXATE7u4>

ANATOMY OF A MINI RESUME

Listed below is information that can be included in a mini resume. Because of space constraints, use short, concise phrases in paragraph form and do not separate the information into sections or with bullets as you would on a full-page resume. (Ideas for writing a mini resume are taken from *The JIST Career Planning and Job Search Course* by J. Michael Farr. 1993, JIST Works, Inc., Indianapolis).

Name: Avoid nicknames

Phone number and e-mail address: List your home and cell phone number and your e-mail address.

Position/Job Objective. Objectives that are too general will be meaningless, and objectives that are too specific may eliminate you from jobs you might be otherwise qualified for or interested in. Use a job objective that describes the type of work you are looking for. *Example: Office/Administrative Support.*

Education: State the degree you are pursuing or already possess and any other special training, certificates or licenses. *Example: Pursuing Associate of Arts degree in Office Technology, Howard Community College; earned MOUS certificate in 2006.*

Experience: Summarize your paid employment, volunteer activities, and informal experience. Include the number of years of your work experience and the areas of your experience. *Example: Over 2 years of customer service and office experience in retail and business settings. Experience working with the general public and resolving customers' complaints.*

Skills: List the technical skills you have gained from your experience and/or skills that can be transferred from one job to another. *Example: Demonstrated ability to meet tight deadlines and work as part of cross-functional teams. Proficiency with advanced functions of Word, Excel and PowerPoint; working knowledge of Access.*

Achievements: Achievements are the results of your efforts, including rewards you have earned or compliments you have received. Include the quantity or volume of your work if appropriate. *Example: Recognized as employee of the month for taking on extra duties in supervisor's absence. Earned an A in all CADD courses. Answered busy switchboard of over 50 calls per hour while also assisting office visitors.*

Knowledge: List knowledge you have gained through training or experience. *Example: Knowledge of postal rates and the fastest delivery times for various shipping methods. Knowledge of auto repair procedures for all domestic and foreign cars.*

Special Conditions: List any special advantages you offer an employer; if you speak a foreign language, list it. *Example: Willingness to work varied hours. Fluent in Spanish and English.*

Traits: Describe your top attributes or qualities and what brings you satisfaction in your work. *Example: Organized, reliable, and self-directed. Motivated by challenging situations that require creativity in solving problems.*

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SAMPLE MINI RESUMES

John Doe
jdoe@hotmail.com

Phone (410) 555-1234
Cell: (410) 555-0909

Objective: Management Trainee

Pursuing Associate of Arts degree in Business Management. Experience in retail and food management. Over two years of experience providing general office support in a fast-paced environment. Proficient in MS Word, Excel, and Quick Books. Trained in basic accounting and inventory management. Organized, efficient, and excellent customer service skills.

Satisfaction comes from helping my boss achieve her goals

Suzie Que
sque@hotmail.com

Phone (410) 555-1234
Cell: (410) 555-0909

Objective: Community Services Specialist

Pursuing Associate of Arts degree in Psychology. Earned grade of A in general and abnormal psychology. Experience working with troubled youth and counseling people in crisis. Trained in conflict mediation and resolution. Knowledge of human service agencies for referral.

Satisfaction comes from helping others resolve problems

***Instructions for creating a mini-resume using MS Word 2007:**

1. Click on "Mailings" from the main tool bar and select "Labels"
2. In the envelopes and labels page, click on "labels" and then "options"
3. On the "Label Vendors" drop down menu, click on "Avery US Letter"
4. On the "Product number" drop down menu, click on "5371 – Business Card" and then on "OK"
5. A box labeled "Address" will come up. Right click within the box to change your font to Times New Roman 8 or 9 pt and to use bolds. As you type text, right click within the box to turn bolding on and off.
6. Type your text. You cannot tab within a box. Use the space bar if you want to separate text on the same line.
7. On the print instructions, make sure "full page of the same label" is checked
8. Click on "New Document" to open a sheet of labels that you can save as a document.
9. Before printing, do a spell check.
10. Print cards on plain paper; hold paper behind label sheet to make the text fits within the margins and perforations of the business cards. Make adjustments on the document if needed.
11. Feed sheet of preformatted business cards in your printer and print.

*Or – use a pre-formatted business card template as can be found in MS Word

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COMMERCIAL SCRIPTS FOR A JOB FAIR

Hello, my name is _____ I am _____ (title or area of expertise).

I have training and experience in _____. In researching your company for today's job fair, I noticed you have openings/an opening for _____. I am particularly good at (specific strengths related to their job opening) and in my positions I have always demonstrated and have been commended for my ability to (mention traits you have demonstrated or have been commended for that would be important in the job, such as, integrity, tenacity). I am particularly interested in working for (name of company) because (mention things based on your research, such as their product or mission you believe in, their ranking in the industry and how your skills would benefit them.) I would be a great asset to your organization because _____. Here is my card (mini resume). When could we schedule an interview to discuss my qualifications and the position further?

Example: Hello, my name is John Jones. I am a seasoned Human Resources professional with experience in small and large technology companies. In researching Microsoft for today's job fair, I noticed you have an opening for an experienced Human Resources professional to manage the HR functions for your mid-Atlantic region. I have experience in overseeing HR functions for decentralized regional offices for a for a nation- company, including talent management, benefits and compensation administration and adherence to HR laws.

What are you seeking for this position? Respond with an appropriate follow-up, such as – What has led to my success in the HR industry are sound decision-making and problem solving skills ,and the ability to understand the dynamics of an organization while paying attention to details. I am interested in Microsoft because it is recognized as the leader in the computer industry, and I value your commitment to diversity and local community development where your regional offices are located. The combination of my training experience and demonstrated record of success in HR would make me a great asset to your company in this position. I would appreciate the opportunity to schedule an interview to discuss my qualifications and the position further.

Example #2: I am a student at Howard Community College where I am studying criminal justice. I have experience working with young people in community outreach programs and providing customer service in retail settings.

In researching the Howard County Police department for today's job fair, I notice you are looking for a community relations intern. What type of person are you seeking for this position? My strengths

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include the ability to work well with others and organize projects, and I am knowledgeable about community resources. I am mature and hard working, and my long-term goal is to get a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice and work in law enforcement. I would appreciate the opportunity to schedule an interview to discuss my qualifications and the position further.