

# Career Fair Quick Guide

## (the basics)

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### YOUR RESUME

1. **Make sure your resume is current.**
  - For the event you can create a generic resume to hand out or, if time allows, you can create a different version for each of your target organizations and have some “generic” versions available for opportunities that come up.
2. **Make sure it is free of errors and printed on high quality paper.**
3. **Upload your resume and update your profile on MySpartanCareer.com. *Why?***
  - Each company has its own process for hiring. Some recruiters hold interviews the day following an event but many collect resumes at the fair then return to campus at a later date to interview candidates.
  - In these cases the employers often contact the Career Services Office and request students be added to their interview schedule(s). If your resume is not in the MySpartanCareer.com system our staff is not able to add you to the interview schedule. We will attempt to contact you but sometimes this situation creates a potential missed opportunity.
  - You may also be required to apply on-line to the company website in order to be considered an official candidate. Saying “I have already submitted my resume to your company through your website....” makes you sound organized and prepared.
  - Checkout MySpartanCareer.com and the company website to find out how they want you to apply for any positions that they may have posted.

### WHY SOME COMPANIES WON'T TAKE YOUR RESUME— Apply On-line to your target companies BEFORE going to the fair

**Federal regulations** require employers to have a consistent application process for all candidates. For many, that means an online application form. **To be officially considered a candidate, they will need you to apply online through their website.**

So if you hear, “Please **apply online**,” it's **NOT A REJECTION!**

It simply means they aren't allowed to accept resumes through any other means.

**So why am I here, if they won't take my resume?**

- To find out about specific opportunities employers offer
- To make a personal connection with a recruiter who can help you with the application process
- To get valuable information about how to make your application stand out

## RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH

1. Identify the top 5-10 organizations you want to meet and take the time to learn about them.
  - To view the positions they may have posted for the event:
    - From you MySpartanCareer.com home page click on the event quick link
    - Click on the Positions Recruiting
    - IMPORTANT: Many organizations list the positions in other locations—not just under their event registration (the positions tab in MySpartanCareer.com under the event). Make sure you check for positions on the MySpartanCareer.com Job Postings/On-Campus Interviewing list and on the company's website.
3. Go to the company's website and other web resources and learn about what the organization does, who their competitors are, the industry they are in, and the opportunities they have. Why do you want to work for them? What skills and abilities would you be bringing to the organization.

## CONNECT YOUR SKILLS to the POSITION and/or COMPANY— Prepare your approach—your 30 second “pitch” or commercial

From the job/internship posting and the company and industry research you do:

1. Identify what opportunities the employer currently has open or, find out what position or department you are interested in within the organization. Determine what the employer is looking for in an ideal candidate.
2. Make the connection between your skill sets, experience, interests, and education and the position/company and be able to articulate this connection.
3. Create and practice your 30 second commercial, pitch, or introduction. This statement explains in 30 seconds or less who you are and why you would be a good candidate for the position or fit within the organization.
  - If you have 5-10 companies you want to connect with write out on index cards some key points and/or questions that you may have and review them while you are in line.
4. Close the conversation by restating your interest in the position and asking about the next steps.

Please do not ask the recruiters why you should work for their company or say that you are interested in any position. This says to the recruiter that you:

- Probably didn't take any time learning about their organization.
- Tells them nothing about the skills and abilities you bring to the table.
- May make you appear desperate or unfocused.

## DRESS and ACT PROFESSIONALLY

### [What should I wear?](#)

At a minimum dress is business casual. Generally, business professional is appropriate at a career fair. If you're unsure, opt for more conservative attire, like a suit. For more information on appropriate dress/appearance, check out [www.careernetwork.msu.edu](http://www.careernetwork.msu.edu), click on Student, Full-time Jobs, Creating a Professional Image

Turn off your cell phone and act professionally while at the event. The recruiters are observing how candidates behave throughout the event not just when they are talking directly to them.

# Five-Step Career Fair Prep Worksheet

Using this form will help you create a game plan for attending a career fair to prepare appropriately. This includes writing a 30-second “sound bite” that tells the employer what you’re seeking and what you can offer.

## Step 1: Set a goal.

Why are you going to the career fair? What do you hope will happen?

To make a good impression for a job or internship.

To learn more about a company or companies

To obtain an informational interview to learn more about the field.

To \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 2a: Research employers attending the fair to identify organizations of interest.

You can’t talk to every company—who is on your “Top 10” list?

### Step 2b: Choose one employer to practice the research/targeting process.

Organization/Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Title/Type of Position you Seek: \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 3: Identify what the employer is seeking in an ideal candidate.

Research the organization’s website or other information to find details. (When a job description does not exist, use your best judgment by using similar positions at other companies.)

- **Content Knowledge:** related directly to the experience that you have with a topic. (i.e. familiarity with healthcare, information technology, public relations strategies)

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- **Skills:** Abilities that are expected for the job. (i.e. writing, communication, technical)

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- **Qualities:** Attributes or values that influence how you approach your work or present yourself to the world. (i.e. enthusiasm, strong work ethic)

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**Step 4a: Connect your skills to what the employer is seeking.**

Considering your experiences and your research about the company, what 3-5 bits of information may be most interesting to the person you plan to meet? (For example, your major, your year, your top three skills, your internship(s), your interest in the field, an interesting development at the organization, something you learned from an informational interview, etc.)

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**Step 4b: Identify at least one reason why you are interested in this organization:**

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**Step 4c: List at least one question that was not answered through your research about the organization:**

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**Step 5: Prepare an “approach”, “pitch” or “commercial.”**

Now that you have enough information to hold a whole conversation, you can easily devise an opening. The samples below are more likely to be used at a career fair, given their length, but can easily be adapted for other situations. Your individual delivery style will also influence the length and flow of this statement. If your style is smooth and enthusiastic, you are more likely to hold someone’s attention. **Total delivery time: 30 seconds to 1 minute.**

Statement Components:

- Some information about you
- Linkage between your information and the organization
- End with a question for your contact

A sample opening might sound like:

Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a student at Michigan State studying Interpersonal Communication. Through my first internship, I had the chance to work with a non-profit organization managing fundraising efforts at a major event. This experience helped me to understand the importance of relationships in fundraising, and I would like to continue exploring how organizations successfully build relationships with donors through an internship with your organization. Can you tell me more about how interns help you with fundraising efforts?

Another sample:

Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I’m a senior at MSU, majoring in Telecommunication, Information Studies and Media. Through my classes, I’ve been studying RFID technology, as well as reading as many articles as I can find about the subject. Your organization is particularly interesting to me, because you are one of the few companies moving forward at a time when some are waiting to see where this trend goes. I really want to work for an organization that is boldly moving forward with this technology. Can you tell me more about what you are looking for in your ideal candidate?

*Create Your Own:*

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**Step 6: Make sure your resume is updated and reviewed. (See Career Passport or check out [www.MySpartanCareer.com](http://www.MySpartanCareer.com)—click on the Events Tab then Workshops to get a complete listing of scheduled workshops.**

**\*\*Need assistance? Make an advising appointment. go to <http://careernetwork.msu.edu>, click on the Advising Quick Link.**