

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE CAREER FAIR

The Career Fair is a great opportunity to practice your interviewing skills, network, and make personal contacts with agencies that interest you. The contacts you make could turn into offers down the road. Here are some helpful hints for a successful event:

Bring 25 copies of your resume (you'll need one of them to gain entrance to the Fair)

Your resume must be updated to include NYU Wagner as your graduate school, and it needs to be free of typographical errors, formatted using an easy-to-read design, and printed on plain white paper. Most employers prefer a one-page, reverse chronological resume. If you are looking at several career tracks, you may want to have different resumes targeting different kinds of jobs.

Dress for an interview

Since no resume precedes you at a Career Fair, the first impression the agency representative has of you is entirely visual. Your appearance should say, "I'm serious and ready to work." Professional attire is required for this event.

Do your organizational research in advance

Gather information as you would for a job interview. OCS has a list of participating agencies on our Career Directory: <http://www.wagner.nyu.edu/careers/careerdirectory.php>. You need to know if your skills, experiences, interests, and values will match an agency's needs. You should be able to answer the question, "Why might you want to work for this agency?" And if the agency doesn't have current positions available that are a right fit for you, talk with them anyway. You never know what the conversation might lead to.

Practice your one-minute pitch

Imagine you have only 60 seconds with an agency representative – what do you think they will want to know about you? How can you position yourself to match their needs with what you have to offer? Keep in mind to whom you are pitching (do your research) and what will distinguish you from other candidates. Tell them things about yourself that are relevant to what they need. Think about the point you want to make, and say it. If you have a conclusion you want them to make about you, tell them. Don't expect them to figure it out for you.

Have a smile, a strong handshake, and a positive attitude

Introduce yourself, rather than wait for the agency representative to take the lead. Recruiters love the personable candidate who steps up, smiles, and introduces him/herself rather than expecting the recruiter to do all of the work.

Don't cruise the tables with a group of friends

Interact with the agency representative on your own. This is your chance to stand out.

Take notes

Don't assume you'll remember everything without writing information down.

Turn off your cell phone

Speaking with a recruiter at a Career Fair is, in essence, your first interview. Don't be embarrassed when your cell phone rings in the middle of your conversation.

Follow-up

Agency representatives will meet dozens of people at a Career Fair. Sometimes, a promising candidate slips through the cracks. Follow-up with a note. Make sure they don't forget you.