



WARRIORS TO WORK™

Managing Your Expectations at a Job Fair

A Job Fair, Career Fair, or Expo is an event where many companies are in attendance. Some will have immediate or future job openings. Others may simply be on a “fishing expedition” to see what kind of talent is out there.

How can you manage your expectations? Don't expect to leave a job fair with a job offer.

These events offer an excellent opportunity for you to network! You can meet and talk briefly with hiring managers, ask questions and gather important information that can help you focus your job search. Representatives are there to provide *you* with information about their company and potential career opportunities. They are an excellent resource for you.

Take advantage of their knowledge and advice.

BEFORE THE EVENT

*Do your research and be prepared

- Check for a list of companies attending the career fair. Take some time to review the company's career website to see what types of jobs are available. See if the company advertises any military or veteran hiring initiatives.
- Be sure to bring the following items with you: multiple copies of your resume, business/contact cards (if you have them), a notebook, and a pen.
- Practice your 60-second elevator speech.

DURING THE EVENT

*Relax, explore your options and ask questions

- There's really nothing you can do wrong during this event. Just be yourself and consider this a chance for *you* to interview companies to see if they might be a good fit for you. Simply “see what's out there” and practice your networking and communication skills. Being comfortable talking about yourself (your skills and what you bring to the table) is something that takes lots of practice.
- Take the initiative to speak with companies you may not have considered previously, or have not been on your radar.
- Network with other jobseekers at the event. Who have they spoken to? Are there companies they do they know about who may be hiring but are not represented at the event?
- Get business cards from anyone you think you would like to connect with again. Make a note on the back of the card to remind you about something you talked about. This is a great way to start a thank you/follow-up email after the event.

- Engage in meaningful conversations. Asking thoughtful questions is a great way to start a conversation—and it demonstrates interest.
 - *I noticed on your website you have XYZ position currently available. Would it be possible to arrange for an informational interview or a job shadow with someone currently in this position so I can get a better idea of what this job might look and feel like at your company?*
 - *Does your company have a military or veterans employee resource or affinity group?*
 - *Why did you choose to work for this company?*
 - *Can you describe the hiring process at your company?*
 - *Many companies today require an online application. If you have already applied online, this is a great conversation starter.*

AFTER THE EVENT

*Follow-up is your responsibility

- Send a hand written thank you note, a “nice to meet you” email, or connect with the representative through LinkedIn (which will allow the recruiter to put a “face” to the resume). You might want to highlight your experience based on what you learned at the event, or simply say that you enjoyed your conversation and look forward to applying for a specific job.
- Visit (or revisit) the website of any company you found particularly interesting. Look for the “Careers” section on the site, where you can usually find information about current openings, company culture, diversity initiatives, and more. If you decide to apply, send the recruiter a follow-up and ask about next steps.