Getting Results at the Career Fair - Advice and Tips from a Recruiter and a Student

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We are going to use your phones to respond to questions and to ask questions.

Please take out your cell phones, but remember to silence them or put them on vibrate.

We cannot see your phone numbers and you’ll never receive follow up text messages from us or this service.
How To Participate via Texting

1. Standard texting rates only (worst case US $0.20)
2. We have no access to your phone number
3. Capitalization doesn’t matter, but spaces and spelling do
Let’s do a test - What is your major?
Write down the code and text in your questions anytime during the presentation!
Agenda

1. Strategic Preparation
2. Career Fair Etiquette
3. How to Stand Out
4. Post Career Fair
Why should you attend the career fair?

- It’s important if your resume does not stand out from others but you do in person.
- Check out the different careers available to engineering majors.
- You can learn more about employers in person than you can from a website.
  - Talk to employees that actually work for the companies.
- Most employers set up their on campus interviews from candidates they meet at the job fair.
- Employers are impressed when freshman and sophomores introduce themselves at career fairs.
Preparation is key

• Elevator Speech
  – 30 second or less introduction that explains who you are and why you would be a good candidate for the position or fit within the organization
  – Do not memorize it, just have an idea of what you want to say

• Identify your list of 5-10 top companies
  – Research what they do and be able to explain it in your own words
  – Check out the open opportunities at the employer and what position or department interests you
  – Determine their ideal candidate
  – Make the connection between your skill sets, experience, interests, and education and the position/company and be able to articulate this connection
  – Write down some key points and/or questions that you may have and review them while you are in line
Dig deep into desired companies

- Apply online to favorite companies BEFORE career fair

- Create eCareer account

- Utilize resources!
  - Other students!
  - Engineering Department/ Career Resources

- Print ~20 resumes

- Tailor resume to particular industry or desired position
Resume advice for the career fair

• Create a generic resume to hand out
  – Differentiate yourself by creating a different version for each of your target organizations

• Why some companies won’t take your resume—
  – 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
  – Federal regulations require employers to have a consistent application process for all candidates
  – Differentiate yourself by saying “I have already submitted my resume to your company through your website….,” this makes you sound organized and prepared
Let’s get some statistics in the room...
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Act and dress professionally

• Dress for success
• Recruiters are observing how candidates behave throughout the event, not just when they are talking directly to them
  – Lobby, restrooms, outside, while in line
• Silence your cell phone or put it on vibrate
• Shoes matter
• Differentiate yourself with your capabilities and not your fashion style
• Carry around as little as possible and make sure you have a free hand to shake
• Don’t be rude to anyone, anytime
  – You never know who you could bump into
• Don’t complain and keep a positive attitude
Career fair blunders

• 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

• DO NOT be submissive
  – Be respectful but aggressive
  – If you stand in the back of the crowd waiting for your chance to speak with the company representative, you may find yourself out in the cold
  – This does not mean you push people out of the way or cut off others while they are speaking
  – Hold your ground and make sure you get to give your elevator speech and ask any questions you may have
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Best practices at career fair

• Save your “favorites” for when you are most comfortable
  – After practicing enough with other companies

• Make a personal connection
  – Tell a memorable story or give example of how you became interested in company/position

• Don’t be afraid to ask for an interview
  – Companies admire persistence
It’s not all about being technical

• Communication skills are key—engineers must be able to present their ideas on paper and in person
• Marketing related knowledge
• Familiarity with business and financial matters
• Leadership skills
• Time management skills
• Ability to work in a team
• Well rounded

If you have all of these skills, does it matter if you cannot communicate your ideas?
Experience and ability to relate it to a job

• Freshman design project
• Part-time summer job from high school or freshman year
• Leadership and participation in groups
  – SWE, IEEE, SHPE, NSBE, WEPO, EON, ENVOY, Sports, ect.
• Technical clubs
• Internship or co-op
• Mentoring
Any new ideas to differentiate yourself?
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Create a LinkedIn Account

• Gets what will get you hired, not what will get you fired, on Google
  – LinkedIn will come up on the first page of your Google results, so if a potential employer Googles you, those Cancun pics aren’t the only things they have to judge you by.

• Online resume
  – You never know what’s going to catch someone’s eye, or why they are searching

• Harmless way to stay in touch
  – Most people think of it as harmless and are more likely to accept than if, for example, you tried to friend them on Facebook
  – Keep track of them & where they are now

• Puts your awesome letter of recommendation out there for the world to see
  – LinkedIn lets you request recommendations from connections, which are displayed on your profile

• Lets you job hunt while not really job hunting
  – It’s basically having your resume out there on the Internet for your dream employer to find, even if you’re still in school & not actively looking for a job quite yet

• Makes you more connectable
  – People are more likely to trust people who know people they know

• Lets you scout your heroes
  – Check out people who have the job you want on LinkedIn

• Gives you context for people you know you’re going to meet
  – Research the people you’re going to interview you. Bring up stuff you have in common, like being fellow alumni or that both of you worked for the same company at one point (mention you saw this information on their LinkedIn profile…no need to seem overly creepy)

• Another place to look for jobs
  – Applying for jobs through job bank so potential employers will be more likely to look at your profile, since it’s linked in your application
Follow up, follow up, follow up

• Ask for recruiters’ business cards at interview
  – Send follow-up “Thank You” e-mail after interview
• The key to a successful job search is persistence
• Try to keep in touch with contacts you have met during your education
• Situations change and jobs may open up within their organization or they may hear of an opportunity through a colleague
• Send them a LinkedIn invitation
• Attend information sessions and networking events

Never Fail to Follow Up
Let’s see how fast you can text!
Now it’s time to answer your questions