



HOW TO “WORK” A VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

What if you could guarantee yourself an initial interview with a recruiter without leaving your home or classroom? What if you could get your resume in front of 5, 10 or even 20 hiring managers—all in the same day?

It sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? But it is true, thanks to virtual job fairs.

VIRTUAL CAREER FAIRS eliminate geographical barriers, enabling **job** seekers and employers to connect with each other no matter where they are. Interviews take place via text or video chat, plus there are **virtual** forums for **job** seekers and employers to meet informally.

Virtual **job fairs** take place online. Organizations with jobs to fill set up "booths" full of information about everything from job openings to advancement opportunities, compensation to culture. The "booths" are often "staffed" by recruiters, hiring managers.

Yes, "attending" a virtual job fair could pay off (big time) for you—if you plan, prepare and impress. Recruiters almost always exercise the option to invite you to an online chat at virtual career fairs. So, be forewarned, even though you are not **face to face in person** time with recruiters, you will be **face to face online** so professional dress and business etiquette are still required. Here's an eight-step strategy for virtual job fair success:

STEP ONE: DO YOUR HOMEWORK

It's been said that finding a job is nothing more than a numbers game—apply for enough of them and sooner or later you'll get one. And while this strategy may pay dividends eventually, it can also prove to be an incredibly frustrating experience full of rejection and wasted time.

A much more rewarding job search strategy is to target your applications toward jobs you are most likely to secure. The same principle applies to virtual job fairs.

Don't just attend a virtual job fair because you can. Do your homework. Check the companies that will be participating and research each company, corporation and/or agency with open positions for which you're qualified and in areas where you want to live. Knowing the history, mission, and goals of companies that interest you may improve your interviewing experience and your chances for success.





STEP TWO: GET YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER

Before you sit down to log on to the virtual job fair, get in the cleaning mood and pick up your house.

Many recruiters will want to video chat with you, and the last thing you want them to see is a stack of empty pizza boxes and beer bottles in the background. Before you log on to the virtual job-fair website, step behind your computer and take a look at your space from the vantage point of your camera.

Put away anything that looks unprofessional, do the dishes, and maybe even set some books or your diploma on the counter.



STEP THREE: DRESS FOR SUCCESS

You know your favorite vintage concert T-shirt, the one you got 13 years ago that's in the bottom dresser drawer? Keep it there. Wear your most professional business attire instead.

While virtual job fairs may seem less formal and more relaxed than traditional job fairs or in-person interviews, they're not. Companies make significant investments in virtual job fairs—in registration and set-up costs, in personnel time and in technology. They take the events very seriously and are looking for job seekers who do the same. [Dressing professionally](#) shows them you're serious.



STEP FOUR: HAVE YOUR PAPERWORK READY

Before you log on, make sure you have your resume ready for reference. Remember everything on your resume is “fair game” for recruiters to question so make sure you are familiar with information on your resume and that you are able to speak about your academic credentials, your qualifications/skills, your accomplishments and your experiences.

Proof read your resume in the days and weeks before the fair to make sure everything is accurate, up to date, and truthful with no exaggerations or untruths. And, to insure greater success, have your resume reviewed by a resume specialist at the Career and Scholarship Center through Symplicity. As an extra precaution, have your resume saved on your desktop so you can quickly access it and email it to recruiters should that be necessary.



STEP FIVE: CHECK YOUR CONNECTION

There's almost nothing worse than being in the middle of instant messaging or a video chat conversation...and having your internet connection cut out. Before you log on, double check your battery to make sure it's fully charged and make sure you have a good internet connection.



STEP SIX: STAY CLASSY

For any virtual career fair or communication with recruiters of any kind; **forget** the casual way you communicate with your friends.

Just because you're sitting on your couch instant messaging doesn't mean you should forget to be professional—remember to address recruiters as "Ms." and "Mr." and not by first name. Be polite. Absolutely no “Hey There” or “Hi” and absolutely no use of “texting” language like “u” when you mean “you” or “2day” when you mean “today”. Never use emoticons or other phrases like LOL or OMG. **Never!**



STEP SEVEN: TAKE NOTES

This step is perhaps the easiest and most important to accomplish: Take notes. Take a lot of them, every step of the way.

Before you log on to the virtual job fair, take notes on the companies that will be participating. What jobs do they list as being open? What are their major accomplishments? How do you think you can help them? Use your notes to develop questions to ask the recruiters. Use them to develop three key messages about yourself—how you can be a valuable part of their team, how your experience translates to their companies' goals, how you can help them.

Use your notes—the questions, the key messages—to show everyone you interact with how prepared you are.



STEP EIGHT: FOLLOW-UP

Send thank you notes to everyone who takes the time to talk to you within 24 to 48 hours. Handwritten notes are still the preferred type of thank you note; even for a virtual career fair. An email thank you note can be sent but ***only if there is no possibility of sending a handwritten note.*** In any case, make sure the spelling, grammar, and punctuation are correct in any thank you note you send.

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