NETWORKING TIPS

Networking provides the opportunity to connect with other professionals and build mutually beneficial relationships. The following tips can help you build strong connections and leave a lasting impression when networking at a career fair.

- Research the company prior to speaking with a representative. Demonstrating a level of familiarity with the company will show the employer that you are heavily interested in them and that you have done your research.
- Print several copies of your resume and cover letter. It can be helpful to carry these copies in a portfolio.
- Avoid bringing too many items with you so that your hands are free and you can easily initiate a handshake.
- Business casual attire is appropriate for a career fair. Adding a blazer can help dress up a blouse or button-up.
- When meeting recruiters, initiate a handshake and introduce yourself using your elevator pitch. Use this as an opportunity to ask about the company, the industry, advice, and opportunities to get involved.
- Ask for the representative’s business card. Within 48 hours after the fair, write him/her a note thanking them for connecting with you at the career fair.
Networking provides the opportunity to connect with other professionals and build mutually beneficial relationships. When networking with representatives at a career fair, it is important to ask strong questions that can help you and the company learn more about one another. Below are examples of questions that may help you explore if this company or field is the right path for you.

**Q:** I'm interested in entering this field after I graduate. How do you recommend preparing myself to succeed in this industry?

**Q:** Do you have any advice on industry specific skills I should be working to develop?

**Q:** What is a common career path for individuals in this field?

**Q:** How did you enter into this career field?

**Q:** How would you describe your work environment and the overall company culture?

**Q:** I'm very interested in this position. How can I begin the application process? Do you have any other advice on how to get connected with you all?

**Q:** What characteristics do you look for in a strong candidate?
THE ELEVATOR PITCH

An elevator pitch is a 30 – 60 second introduction of who you are as a professional, your experience, and what you are seeking to accomplish. It is a great idea to introduce yourself with your elevator pitch when networking. It is also appropriate to use your elevator pitch in response to the questions, "Tell me about yourself" or "What do you do?" Incorporate the following elements into your pitch.

Part 1: Start with stating your name and what you are currently doing. This should include your area of study and when you expect to graduate.

Part 2: Briefly describe your experience and involvement. This should be accomplishment focused. Tailor your information to the company or position of interest when possible.

Part 3: Describe what you are interested in doing and what type of work you are seeking. This section should highlight specifics about where you would like to be in the future.

Part 4: When networking, it is recommended that you ask a question at the end of your pitch. This will help you transition into a two-way conversation with the other individual.
THE ELEVATOR PITCH

Example 1

Part 1: My name is Clyde Cougar and I am a sophomore psychology major at the College of Charleston.

Part 2: Throughout my education, I have worked with Chick-fil-A as a cashier. During my time with the company, I have gained communication skills and I have learned how to work with a team. I have also grown in my leadership abilities, as I help train new employees.

Parts 3 & 4: I am interested in learning more about opportunities to further exercise these skills and grow in my management abilities.

Example 2

Part 1: My name is Clyde Cougar and I am a junior marketing major at the College of Charleston.

Part 2: I completed an internship this past summer with the Historic Charleston Foundation, where I worked with the Marketing and Communications department. During my time there, I learned how to manage the foundation’s website and social media accounts.

Part 3: After I graduate, I would like to work for a local business where I can apply my experience in social media management to advance company awareness among its targeted audience.

Part 4: I would love to hear about opportunities to apply my experience to this industry.