Getting the most out of a Career Fair

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What to Expect

- Many companies
- Broad field distributions
- Lots of people
What not to expect

- Tons of time to explain your work
- A job on the spot
Preparing Ahead of Time

- Who is coming
- What business etiquette should you know
  - Eye contact
  - Shaking hands
- What are you looking for?
Starting conversations

- My name is:
- I study X to understand Y.
- I am looking for (insert position here).
- I am interested in your company because...
What to bring

- CV or resume
- Dress professionally
- Wear comfortable shoes
Working the room

- Plan your wish list
- Do your homework
- Collect business cards
After the fair

- Notes
- Follow-ups
Career Fairs alone are not enough…
What is networking?

Networking is the process of establishing links between people with the intent to promote communication for mutual benefit.

-Dave Jensen
Who: Define your network

- Old classmates/labmates
- Alumni Association
- Professional Societies
- Finding company contacts
  - Someone who does interesting work
  - Finding an HR contact
    - No phone calls please?
- Recruiters
When do you Network?

- Everyday
  - Actually asking—do you know someone in X field?
  - Making small talk
  - Meeting with speakers
  - Conferences
How?: Introductions

- What can your provide to the relationship?
- How can you benefit?
- Who do you really want and need to meet?
- Have someone make the introduction
- The Handshake
- Business Cards
How?: Working the room

- Research
- Target
- Conferences
- Entering and exiting conversations
  - Handshakes
  - Eye contact
  - Taglines
How?: Follow Ups

- Organize contacts
- Email a personal note within 24 hours
  - Include what you discussed
- Extra-special: send a written thanks
- Foster the relationship
  - Article of interest
How?: Online networking

- LinkedIn
- Nature Network
- Facebook, Second Life, MySpace

- Not a substitute for personal networking
Grow your Network

A mediocre CV (stylistically, not with respect to your actual expertise and accomplishments) and a lot of networking is guaranteed to get you a job. A stunning CV and no networking is equivalent to playing lotto. –Kevin Foley, Ph.D.