

My College Career Fair Is Over, NOW WHAT?

Visiting companies have left, the tables have been taken down, and my suit is lying crumpled on the floor in a corner of my room. Career fairs are over for the semester and I don't really feel that much closer to having a job/internship for next summer.

Now what do I do?

"So I *talked to* a lot of people...now how do I make something *happen*?"

Here are a few tips to keep you moving forward in the recruiting process.

- Follow up with the companies you met **that you were most interested in**. First step is always to apply online (especially to the bigger companies that have an online application system). Apply to any jobs or internships that look appealing and appropriate. Keep yourself organized - create a spreadsheet or tracking system for what positions you've applied to, and when.
- Apply to each job twice. Huh? This is what I mean - now that you've applied on-line, follow up with a person that works in or has a connection to that company. It could be a recruiter you met at the fair, an alumnus of your school, a contact of someone you know, a family friend or relative - ANYONE who can call attention to the resume you just submitted to their database.
- Go find that stack of business cards that just may be sitting in a drawer, purse, or the pocket of the blazer that you wore that day! Compose a quick email to the recruiter or person you know at the companies you've applied to, and attach a copy of your resume. The email should be brief but let the person know you are definitely interested in their company. Your final question to them - What do you suggest I do as a next step?
- IF your contact person is an alumnus of your school, don't assume they will refer you JUST BECAUSE you're from the same school. Suggest a phone conversation or in-person meeting so that you may spend a little time with the person, and they can learn a bit more about you and your skills, and therefore (hopefully) feel more comfortable referring you.

For example: ***"Hello Mary, It was great meeting you at the WPI Career Fair last week. I was the one who talked to you about ABC. I really enjoyed learning about all the great new products TNT is developing and would love the opportunity to further discuss the internship program that you have available for next summer. I have applied on your website to these requisitions - [list them by name or by number] - and I am also attaching a current version of my resume. I can best be reached by email or cell on Tuesdays and Thursdays after 3 PM, and I look forward to hearing from you soon!"***

- If you didn't get to all the tables at the fair, can't remember someone you spoke with or if you missed a company you wanted to meet, follow up with your career center and request the information from them.
- You may want to do some additional research about the company before you write the letter. Show them that you've done your homework.
- Set goals for yourself. Put time aside to work on this as if it were a weekly class assignment. Maybe you decide you'll devote 2 hours a week to your job search. Or that you'll apply to 6-10 companies a week. Make your goals actionable, and measurable.

- Still not getting any interviews or interested in companies who weren't at your career fair? Make a list of your 'dream' employers and ask your career center or professors if they have any contacts there.
- Interested in doing an internship near home next summer? Network with family and friends while you're home on break. You might be surprised to find out that Aunt Martha knows a person who works at your absolute favorite company. Once Aunt Martha connects you to her contact ask for an informational interview. An informational interview is a way for you to learn more about a company. You should still dress like you are going for an actual interview and bring along your resume. Not only will you learn more about the company but you will also make a great first impression and that contact will remember you when a job comes up.
- Talk to your professors and see if they know of any opportunities for the summer.
- Search indeed.com and other online job search engines.
- Set a goal of trying to get at least 1 interview in the next three weeks. Each interview will offer great practice for you. Even if you don't get the job, you'll feel more confident with each one that you've done.

****TIP OF THE DAY* Don't stop talking to people! As mentioned earlier, get informational interviews whenever you can and ask people about their company, their jobs and their career paths. You will learn so much by doing this. You never know who you might get connected to, or what you may learn from a meeting like this.***

Most importantly, keep a master list of all of the professionals you have met along the way, and follow up with them 1-2x a year and let them know how you're doing. People who are good at this never need to look for a job again, their contacts are always thinking of them and sending along job leads! But they can't do this unless they hear from you regularly, and find out what you've been up to and what you want to do next.

Finding a job is like having a job - it takes time. Dedicate the time you need to secure this next job or internship.

Email me at sallyhelps.com if you want to talk over tactics, do a practice interview, or to discuss strategy or your future!