

# RPI SOPHOMORE CAREER EXPERIENCE

## **How to Beat the Odds at a Career Fair**

January 21, 2009

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# Strategy Overview

## ★ Before the Career Fair

- ★ Research your “ideal job”
- ★ Prepare and polish your resume
- ★ Prepare and practice your “pitch”
- ★ Identify how you plan to “navigate” the career fair (Target the companies that offer your “ideal job”)


## ★ During the Career Fair

- ★ Dress professionally
- ★ Navigate the career fair

## ★ After the Career Fair

- ★ Assess how well you did – and what you might do differently next time
- ★ Followup with target companies

# What is your "Ideal Job"?

- ★ Assess your personal interests and limitations
    - ★ What are you hoping to learn in your job experience?
    - ★ What do you enjoy doing?
    - ★ Are there areas are you NOT interested in working?
    - ★ Do you have a geographic preference? Do you like to travel?
    - ★ Do you thrive in a fast-paced environment, or do you prefer time to analyze a situation before making a decision?
    - ★ Do you prefer a hands-on environment? Or a desk job?
    - ★ Do you prefer to work with a lot of people, or on your own?
  
  - ✧ Few jobs are PERFECT!
    - ★ What do you value the most? Salary, flexible hours, or location?
    - ★ What things are you willing to compromise on, and which are you not?
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# Research Your Ideal Job

## ★ Identify companies that might match your interests

- ★ RPI RedHawk Joblink search for on-campus recruiting and open job postings
- ★ Review the career fair employer list (JobLink → quick links → CDC Career Fair Participants)
- ★ Develop a list of potential employers to visit at career fair

## ★ Research the companies on your list (locations, products, services, values, etc.)

- ★ Company's website
- ★ Annual reports (Yahoo Finance or Google Finance)
- ★ Recent hires or interns you know personally
- ★ Campus Informational sessions
- ★ SCE/PLP (Professional Leadership Program) events
- ★ Business magazines, company news (Google)
- ★ Alumni events, chapter events (e.g. AIChE), and networking opportunities

## ★ Prioritize your company list

## ★ Prepare and prioritize questions to ask company representative base on your research

# Prepare Your Resume

- ★ Be specific in your job objectives (might need different resume for different companies)
- ★ State your major, graduation date and whether you are looking for a full-time job or Co-Op/internship position
- ★ State your GPA (it is what it is, and company will ask)
- ★ List your previous work (campus/corporate) experiences, highlighting your contributions (note that as a sophomore you might not have many work experiences, but as a junior you should try to have those on your resume.)
- ★ Highlight campus/community leadership involvement (next best thing to good work experience!)
- ★ Express your interests and special skills (e.g. programming); no need to list all your core courses
- ★ Limit your resume to one page but do not use small font (less than 10 pt)
- ★ Utilize CDC Career Counselor to critique your resume
- ★ Proofread your resume and make sure your resume is PERFECT
- ★ Print out several copies of your resume on high-quality paper
- ★ Register at RedHawk Job Link and create your online profile and resume
- ★ Post your on-line resume on company websites
- ★ Submit your resume to association resume books - AIChE, SWE, etc

# Prepare and Practice Your “Pitch”

## ★ Career Fair – Make Yourself Stand Out!

### ★ Practice your handshake

- ★ A firm and strong handshake with a smile

### ★ Practice your introduction pitch

- ★ A 30 seconds sell pitch to impress employer
- ★ Introduce yourself, your year, major, and job interest (avoid boring and long details)
- ★ Try to ask a specific educated questions from your company research
- ★ Deliver a clear and concise message to potential employer
- ★ Point to items on your resume to highlight your interests and abilities
- ★ Be confident and positive

# Prepare Your Navigation Plan

- ★ Print out the Career Fair Map (CDC website)
- ★ Locate your company on the map
- ★ Plan your visit in priority order base on your research



# During the Career Fair

- ★ **First Impression Counts! Dress appropriately, wear something comfortable, but professional and conservative**
- ★ **Navigate Career Fair**
  - ★ Get there early and visit the highest priority companies first
  - ★ Remember to conduct yourself professionally at all times
  - ★ Turn off your cell phones
  - ★ Navigate the career fair alone -- avoid going with a group of friends
  - ★ Patiently wait in line for your turn and be considerate to others
  - ★ Contact with each recruiter is like a mini-interview – deliver your “pitch”
  - ★ Adjust the tone of your “pitch” as needed based on the way the recruiter responds
  - ★ If you have ever spoken to this company or recruiter before, make sure you mention that and express your continued interest
  - ★ Kindly ask for business card and contact information (note not all company career representative will want to do this and instead may refer you to the corporate website for further information/communication)

# After the Career Fair

- ★ Organize and review all the brochures and business cards that you collected from the career fair
- ★ Take notes right after the fair: whom you met, what you discussed, and opportunities were mentioned
- ★ Decide if you want to work for this company
- ★ Assess how well you did – and what you might do differently next time
- ★ Make sure you follow the company application process
  - ★ Complete company online application and provide updated resume online (if necessary)
  - ★ Update resume at CDC (if necessary)
- ★ Send thank you letters to recruiters you met, reiterate your interest in company/position and any additional questions for the recruiter (if you received the recruiter's business card or contact information)
- ★ Revisit RedHawk Job Link for updates and job opportunities

ANY QUESTIONS?

