

# QUICK GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR A FAIR

## Checklist for a Fair

### Before the Fair

- Prepare your CV and a cover letter.
- Research companies attending the fair.
- Prepare your 30 second infomercial to present to each employer.
- Bring a portfolio to carry your CVs.
- Bring your business/student information cards.
- Prepare questions ahead of time that you want to ask and information you would like to acquire from the company representatives.
- Dress the part. First impressions are critical, so dress professionally.

### At the Fair

- Ensure your cell phone/pager is turned off.
- Stop at the registration table and get a name tag.
- Introduce yourself while giving a firm handshake and maintaining eye contact and good posture. Present your 30 second infomercial
- Be prepared to answer and ask questions.
- Draw upon your experience. Transferable skills are very important.
- Keep an open mind to all opportunities an organization has to offer.
- Ensure to ask for a business card from the representative.
- After leaving the table, jot some notes down about the company and the representative.

### After the Fair

- Develop a plan of action to follow up with the companies you liked and write thank you letters to the various reps.

## 30 Second Infomercial

Fairs can be daunting especially when you do not know how to approach employers - the key is to be prepared. Here are some recommendations. When you meet a representative at a fair you should greet them with a firm handshake and a smile. You should begin with a 30 second introductory script that you have prepared and practiced ahead of time.

### Sample Script

- 5 seconds: Personal information, degree, year, major
- 5 seconds: Why you are here and the type of opportunities or information you are seeking
- 5 seconds: Experience (work, internship, volunteering)
- 5 seconds: Accomplishments – work, classroom, activities and organizations
- 10 seconds: Knowledge of the company

Do your research before the fair so you are knowledgeable about the company. This will also ensure that after your introduction you can ask the employer a captivating question, e.g.. Can you tell me more about the new product you are developing? Or can you give me more details about your management training program? This will allow you to engage the employer in conversation.

### Sample Script

Hello. My name is Kelly Lewis and I am in my fourth year of a political science degree, with a minor in sociology. I noticed on your website that you have openings for XXX and I am interested in a position in this capacity. Last summer I had an internship with XXX where I was able to participate in XXX. The most interesting project that I worked on was about XXX. I have been following your company's progress in New York and have read various pieces about it in the New York Times. Could you tell me more about the proposed expansion to Montreal and the new training program you are offering to new employees?

## Making a Business Card: Student information card

### Education

- Indicate degree(s) followed by majors/minors in brackets
- Indicate school if desired

### Name

- List the name you prefer to be called e.g. Matt vs. Matthew

### Telephone Number

- Highlight your number, by putting it in bold or a larger text.
- Ensure you have a voice mail which indicates your name and does not have an unprofessional message which might confuse the employer or give them a negative impression of you.

### Languages

- Indicate if you are bilingual and note the languages in brackets in order of fluency

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### The Do's and Don'ts:

- Do avoid too many abbreviations
- Don't overcrowd your card
- Don't print your card on flimsy paper or with perforated edges
- Do add value to your card by printing on the back (e.g. use it for a French version).
- If you chose to place a logo/graphic make sure that it is appropriate for the recipient
- If you have varying business card versions (with different addresses or information on them), distribute them accordingly

### Address

- If living away from home while at school, you might want to put your permanent address, rather than your temporary
- In some cases you might want to consider printing two sets of cards with the varying residential information

### E-Mail

- Preferably not a hotmail, yahoo, or other free email service account.
- Every student has a McGill e-mail account for life, even after graduation. Such an address makes you look more professional and is more effective as many employers block POP based email addresses.