**BEFORE VIRTUAL EVENT CONTENT**

Don’t “walk” into a virtual career fair with zero preparation. These are the things you’ll want to do ahead of time to set yourself up for success.

**Register ahead of time**

You’re going to want to register beforehand. Not only will this prevent any last-minute hiccups before the career fair, but it will allow you to get a glimpse at the employers participating in the fair. Which leads us to our next tip…

**Research participating organizations**

After registering, take some time to review the organizations attending the career fair. You’ll want to get an idea of some of the companies you’d like to meet with. You also don’t want to walk in unprepared—learn about the companies and think of questions you’ll want to ask.

“At virtual career fairs, companies look for candidates who are curious and ask questions,” says John Doe, Zone Recruiting Manager at ACME. “In order to stand out from the crowd, candidates should do their research and know about the companies and positions they are interested in.”

**Prepare your resume**

This is a no-brainer, yet so important. Because you’re going to provide your resume to employers you meet with, you’re going to want it up-to-date and spotless for the optimal first impression.

“Don’t wait until the last minute to review your resume,” says Amy Smith, State University Senior Career Service Advisor. “Have it updated, proofed and reviewed by someone else ahead of time.”

The same goes for your LinkedIn account, or a portfolio of your work samples. If the platform allows, upload your resume to your account so it is accessible and ready to hand over to any employers you meet with at the career fair.

**Practice your pitch**

How will you introduce yourself? Why are you interested in the company? What types of positions are you seeking? How is your previous work experience relevant? What do you plan on asking the representatives at the virtual career fair?

You’ll want to spend some time mulling over questions like these so you’re ready to answer them without hesitation when the time comes. Your well-thought-out responses could impress a recruiter—and even allow you to stand out from the crowd of applicants.

**Make sure your technology is ready to go**

You’ll want to make sure your device is capable of supporting you in the virtual career fair. While it is definitely preferable to have camera capabilities in case an employer would like to speak with you face to face, you don’t necessarily have to have a device with a camera, says Smith.

You should also try a dry run the day before the virtual career fair to ensure smooth sailing on the big day, advises John Brown, Vice President of Human Resources at Huge Communications Corp.

“Plan an IT dress rehearsal before to avoid last minute surprises. Also, be sure to download necessary software for the fair, if need be. Install these a day early, leaving enough time to clarify any troubleshooting questions you may have.”

He also advises attendees to think long and hard about the type of device they plan to use and where they’re located.

“Choose your location and device wisely. To avoid shaky camera syndrome, use a desktop, laptop or propped-up tablet rather than a smartphone that you’ll need to hold throughout the conversation,” he says.

You may also want headphones if you cannot attend from a quiet, private location.

**DURING VIRTUAL EVENT CONTENT**

Once you log in, how can you stand out from the crowd at a virtual career fair? Here are a few pieces of key advice.

**Wear a professional outfit**

You can expect to interact with employers at a virtual career fair through video meetings. Make the most out of this opportunity to make a connection by looking professional and presentable.

“If you have an opportunity to get face to face with an employer, why wouldn’t you want to be ready for that?” asks Smith. “If you’re going to be on camera, be prepared to look professional from at least the waist up. You can wear your yoga pants, but make sure you have a button-up shirt and suit coat on top.”

**Attend from a distraction-free environment**

In addition to your professional attire, you will also want to plan out where you’ll be attending the virtual career fair from. A quiet location is ideal—and camera capabilities mean that you’ll want to ensure it’s distraction-free for employers.

“Even on a small screen, potential employers can still see plenty of background. Make sure the room you’re in is clean, quiet and well lit. Your expertise should be the focal point of the conversation, not a visible pile of laundry or dirty dishes,” says Brown.

**Be ready to put yourself out there**

At virtual career fairs, it’s all the more important to exert yourself to make connections.

“It’s even easier to be a wallflower at a virtual career fair than a traditional one,” warns Smith.

Once an employer engages you, the ball is in your court to introduce yourself and ask questions about the organization and open positions. Attendees must present themselves to employers and feel confident doing so.

**Use clear, professional business communication**

Being a virtual career fair, much of your communication will be done through face-to-face interactions in the platform. To make a great first impression, you’ll want to demonstrate articulate communication.

“Grammar matters, and text lingo, emoticons and any slang won’t be appropriate,” says Smith. “Your professional written communication needs to be on its A-game.”

**Demonstrate strong body language in video chats**

Just like in a traditional career fair, you’ll want to present yourself as a confident and competent job seeker. One way that employers pick up on this is through your body language. If you’re on a video chat with a recruiter at the virtual career fair, you’ll want to stay conscious of your body language.

“On camera, it’s even more critical to hold eye contact with the employers you're interacting with,” says Brown. “Speak clearly and avoid slouching. Keep hand gestures to a minimum so you don’t distract the person you're talking to or block your face from the camera.”

**Ask for next steps and contact information**

When talking to recruiters at the career fair, don’t hesitate to be forward and offer to send a copy of your resume. You can also ask about the next steps in the process—whether that means getting in touch with human resources, filling out a job application or sitting down for a formal interview.

Before parting ways with a recruiter, be sure to take down their contact information. Some employers may have it uploaded and accessible within the virtual career fair platform. If not, ask how you can stay in touch. You’ll need this information for following up after the virtual career fair.

**AFTER VIRTUAL EVENT CONTENT**

Don’t let your efforts go to waste by neglecting to follow up with connection after the virtual career fair.

**Reach out the next day with a thank you**

Whether it’s an email, phone call or hand-written thank-you note, be sure to reach out to the connections you made at the career fair, thanking them for their time and further expressing your interest.

Because recruiters at career fairs come in contact with many candidates and resumes, you can use this chance to refresh their memory and remind them about why you’re a promising candidate, why you’re interested in the company and the skills or experience you bring to the table.

You may also want to send them your resume if you haven’t already, along with your portfolio or work samples if you have any. You can also stay in touch by adding the recruiter on LinkedIn.

**How’d it go?**

Fill out this quick survey to let us know what you thought about this virtual career fair: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/virtual-career-fair-feedback>