



Preparing for Career Events

Overview

It is important to make a positive first impression at career events like the ESS Industry Networking Night and the UC Irvine Career Fair. As you prepare for these events, make sure to think about how you will connect with employers. Here are some tips to help you maximize the experience.

Career Event Tips

Do Your Homework! Prior to attending a career event, do some research on the employers you are most interested in meeting. Visit the “About” and “Careers” sections of each employer’s website. There is nothing more unappealing than a candidate who walks up to a table and says, “So, what do you do?”

Have a Plan. Networking events can be overwhelming in size and number of attendees. Take a look at who is attending in advance and find out where everyone will be located. Spend some time thinking about the employers you are most interested in connecting with so you can plan your time accordingly.

Prepare Questions in Advance. You will feel and sound more confident if you plan out what you are going to say and ask before approaching an employer. Employers will be impressed that you took the time to come prepared and ask thoughtful questions about their career paths and other job roles available at their companies.

Practice Your Elevator Pitch. Tell your story and highlight your strengths and interests in a brief introduction monologue. Don’t forget to smile and give a firm handshake!

Dress Appropriately. For the ESS Industry Networking Night, business formal attire is required. This means a suit jacket, dress shirt or blouse, matching suit pants or knee-length skirt, and polished, low heel, close-toed shoes. For the UC Irvine Career Fair, business casual attire is appropriate.

Be Respectful of an Employer’s Time. Be sure to budget your time so you don’t dominate an employer’s table and/or miss out on other networking opportunities. If there are other people waiting to speak with an employer, be brief in your conversation and wrap it up. Pay attention to the social cues an employer may be giving you. Thank the employer for his or her time and then gracefully move on.

Ask for Business Cards. If you would like to stay in touch with someone you meet at a career event, ask for a business card. Make sure you jot down notes on the back to help you remember where and when you met the person, as well as what you discussed. You need to “activate” the card within 48 hours by sending the person a “nice to meet you / thank you for your time” email.

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