

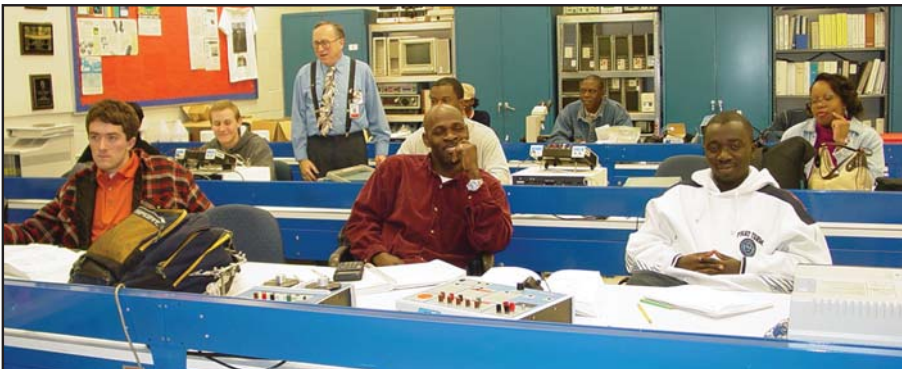
*Maximize Your Experience...*

## Make Job Fairs Work for You

Mike O'Rear

It's springtime and employers are busy descending upon college campuses around the country. Job fairs bring employers and prospective employees together in one place, making the job search more efficient and convenient for job hunters.

The key to a successful job fair experience is preparation. If you are a student, the first thing to do is visit your school's career center and obtain a list of companies that will be attending the fair. Review the list and note the ones you wish to visit. It is a good idea to visit each company's website and become familiar with its history. For BMETs, the list of companies may include hospitals, independent service organizations, and original equipment manufacturers. Of course the job fair is not only for graduating students but also for experienced BMETs and specialists.



*Students at Chattahoochee Technical College are introduced to prospective employers through career fairs and internships.*

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### Check Points

Keys to a successful job fair experience include:

- ✓ Keep your resume to one page.
- ✓ Include a list of your extracurricular activities. It shows you are well-rounded.
- ✓ Be prepared to discuss your long term career goals.
- ✓ Use the job fair as a preliminary interview with a prospective employer.

### Polish Up Your Resume

The next step in preparing for the job fair is a well-crafted resume. For the novice, the resume should be a one-page document highlighting the courses you have taken that relate directly to the job you want. Also, if you have completed an internship component you may want to list equipment you have experience in performing preventive maintenance, calibration, and repair.

You should also list any extracurricular activities you were engaged in during your college years, i.e. clubs, sports, and service projects. Employers are looking for well-rounded people who exhibit good citizenship. The school career center may be able to help with drafting and polishing up your resume. They may even conduct seminars on resume writing and job interviewing. Don't overlook your professors and other instructors who may be able to review your resume and offer suggestions.

**Pay Employers a Visit**

Consider your job fair visit as a mini interview. Be prepared to discuss your career goals and what you can contribute to the company. When you arrive at the job fair, walk around to locate the companies you want to approach. If you will be visiting several employers, take notes and keep them separated so you can review them afterward and follow up on the company you really want to work with. Also, be sure to send thank-you letters to show that you appreciated the recruiters' time. If you have completed an application or left a resume with a company, follow up to emphasize your interest.

You may want to bring an expandable file with a separate folder for each company with whom you talked with. Be sure to ask for business cards and bring enough copies of your resume so you can leave one or two with each employer. As with any interview, you want to make a good impression, so dress appropriately. You should be well groomed to aid in your first impression. Be courteous and answer all questions to the best of your ability.

**Make the Connection**

While job fairs offer a great way to meet potential employers, there are other ways to explore employment opportunities. One way that has been successful at Chattahoochee Technical College (CTC) is internships. Internships are used as a capstone course in the school's curriculum and provide both employer and student a chance to determine if there might be a perfect match.

Another way is for schools to invite employers to interview on campus. Each year, ARAMARK conducts on-campus interviews at CTC. The last and probably most important means to finding a job is networking. Of course the job fair, internships, and on-campus interviews are ways to begin networking. Also, most states have biomedical societies that hold annual symposiums, allowing students to meet companies looking for entry-level biomed.

Remember, look to the resources around you—from the school career center and biomed societies to your professors. Good luck! ■

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