

## Preparing for Career Fairs (Industry Days) & other Networking Events

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If only 20% of jobs are advertised what's the key to accessing the hidden job market?

Networking and word of mouth is the key to unlocking employment opportunities within most industries. Employers like to recruit students from targeted schools and BCIT students and alumni are in demand!

Industry Days are an opportunity for employers to connect with their future employees and for students and grads to start developing their industry ties to create a solid foundational network that will benefit them for the duration of their career. Not all employers will be hiring right away or have current opportunities. Be sure to talk to employers about their hiring plans.

Industry Days are industry-specific recruiting events where BCIT students and grads have an opportunity to network with employers in their field, learn about job opportunities, and apply to available jobs.

### *Industry Days - Job Seeker Tips for Success:*

- 1. Prepare & Set Goals.** Research each employer that is attending the event and know which companies you want to target. Attending employers are published on the BCITSA website before the event. Employers like to hear "I've done some research on your company and would like to know more about... ". Come up with at least 3 well thought out questions you'd like to ask each employer based on the research you've done. Before the event, determine your networking goals to help focus on the information, advice, resources, referrals, etc. you are seeking. Strive for quality rather than quantity and be realistic in your expectations.
- 2. Things to Bring.** Bring several copies of your resumé. If you don't have a resumé consider accessing the resources on the BCITSA website or speak to your School's Career Specialist. A letter of introduction / cover letter to complement your resume can add impact. Business cards are also worthwhile to take to a job fair as they can easily be handed out to a larger number of people while you're networking and are relatively easy to put together.
- 3. Personal Appearance.** Dress to impress! Know what kind of dress is appropriate for job seeking in your industry. Remember to bring a professional looking case to add to your image and to place your resumes in so they can be neatly handed out.
- 4. Elevator Pitch.** Develop a strong introduction to make you stand out from the crowd. This should be extremely focused, and include what you will bring to an organization. The best way to perfect your elevator pitch is to practice so that it sounds very natural in practice.

5. **Confidence is Key.** Smile. Establish eye contact, introduce yourself, and extend a firm handshake. Take note if your contact is wearing a name tag as it will help you to remember their name and its' proper spelling.
6. **Interview Questions.** Be prepared to answer general interview questions and questions specific to your industry. Speak to your Career Specialist to develop a strategy to answer interview questions and to practice them.
7. **Know how to Demonstrate your Leadership Abilities.** Since you may not have any real career experience yet, this will be evaluated by how you've spent your time on campus. Have you assumed any leadership roles within a student organization? Do you have any volunteer experience? What interests or passions do you have outside of your classes that could demonstrate leadership ability?
8. **Ask Questions to Engage in Conversation.** Begin by asking one or two open-ended questions, for example, "Could you tell me a bit more about the various areas of research you are currently involved in?" Demonstrate energy, enthusiasm, and that you are listening carefully to what the employer is saying through your verbal and non-verbal communication.
9. **Mingle and Try to Meet Several People.** Circulate around the room and talk to as many people as you can. Be sure to exchange business cards after a conversation in which you have developed rapport with the other person.
10. **Take Notes as You Go.** At the first opportunity, jot down some key points about the people you have met, what you discussed and any follow-up arrangements. You could do this on the back of the respective person's business card, in your notebook, or use a Job Search Log.
11. **Follow Up.** Follow up with potential employers after the event through email, LinkedIn or a personalized hand written thank you card, preferably within 24 hours. This is particularly important if you have engaged in an interview at the event, or made a quality connection or lead. If you have promised to follow-up, be sure to do it.

Look out for Industry Days and other networking events organised throughout the year by the BCITSA Career Services on **Career Track** (<http://www.bcitsa.ca/careers/>).