

## Making use of fairs, networking and careers events

Are you looking for a company for your internship, your thesis or your first job? Fairs, networking and career events are very good opportunities to meet potential employers, to get a personal impression and to leave a personal impression.

Career, job or company contact fairs often work in a similar way: Companies present themselves with fair stands and employees from the specialist or human resource departments. The aim is to promote the company as an employer to young people and to get into conversation with potential employees.

The benefits of such fairs for you can vary: You can inform yourself without obligation and get a first overview or you can make valuable contacts, get answers to your individual questions and even have short interviews. Who knows? Maybe you will meet someone who has your dream job and can tell you about how to get there as well as the daily work routine.

In addition, other event formats bring you into contact with companies and allow you to gather information and expand your network. The variety of events is great – at FH Münster and beyond. Make use of these opportunities. You can significantly reduce the work involved with applications.

### Content

Find the right events for you.....	1
Decide on your objective and prepare.....	2
Plan the day (fair) .....	2
Use the supporting program (fair) .....	3
Bring questions with you .....	3
Take notes .....	4
Pay attention to the notices (fair) .....	4
Take your application dossier with you (fair).....	4
Prepare a personal presentation (pitch).....	5
Choose an appropriate outfit.....	5
Be open to small talk and networking.....	6
Learn from events.....	6
Make use of the contact for your application .....	6

### Find the right events for you

#### Career, job or company contact fairs

- [Fairs at FH Münster](#)
- [Business Contacts \(job fair at Münster Uni\)](#)
- Regional, industry or target group-specific trade fairs

Websites with fair calendars or lists can help you become aware of fairs as a first step. Visit the fair website in the second step. There you will find details that will help you decide for or against visiting the fair, such as the list of exhibitors or the supporting program.

The sectors or employers you are interested in are not represented? Then a visit to a trade fair could help you. It is not a question of recruiting staff. However, a visit can help to learn about companies and professional developments. Important: Check if students are admitted and if there are discounted tickets.

### **Other events with employers at FH Münster**

FH Münster organises various events with local companies where you can exchange ideas and network with representatives. Sometimes it's about professional perspectives or (technical) topics. Sometimes the aim is a relaxed conversation. Participating may be worth it for you in different situations: if you are still at the beginning of your professional orientation, if you are preparing your applications or if you are already in the middle of applying. The events are part of the [PLUSPUNKT program](#) in the category "[Bewerbung und Berufseinstieg](#)".

### **Decide on your objective and prepare**

If you really want to benefit, it is important that you know beforehand what you want to use the event for and that you prepare accordingly.

#### **Option 1: Simply looking around**

Do you just want to look around and find out about companies in a region, job profiles or developments in your industry? Think about what exactly interests you and how you can ask for it. Individual talks are often a very insightful addition to a company's own presentation.

#### **Option 2: Get targeted information**

Would you like to contact specific employers and ask about opportunities for internships or theses? Consider what information is important to you personally or formally. With targeted questions, you will get into the conversation well and increase the chances of getting information that will help you further.

#### **Option 3: Expand your network**

Would you like to get to know other people because you are interested in careers, professions or employers? Check beforehand which companies and people are present and think of questions that show your interest.

#### **Option 4: Introduction and application**

Would you like to introduce yourself personally to selected companies or apply directly? Then take your application with you and prepare a pitch / self-presentation.

### **Plan the day (fair)**

Especially for the employers you definitely want to meet, it is important to plan enough time. The right person is not always immediately available for an interview and there may be waiting times. Check if there is an opportunity to schedule appointments in advance. This makes planning easier and ensures that you get your turn.

- Spontaneous and targeted contacts: 10 to 20 minutes per meeting + 5 to 10 minutes for notes
- Previously scheduled meetings: 20 to 30 minutes per meeting + 5 to 10 minutes for notes

## Use the supporting program (fair)

Many fairs offer additional services such as lectures, workshops, panel discussions or speed dating, which can provide information about occupational fields, sectors or career paths. In addition, there may be opportunities for you to talk to company representatives during or afterwards.

To ensure that you do not miss anything interesting: Take a look at the website or the fair catalogue and see if you need to register separately.

## Bring questions with you

What do you need to know? What do you want to know? What helpful information is not available on the company homepage? In personal contact you will get answers that are often not so easy to get via the Internet. Of course, questions can also arise spontaneously. However, prepared questions help to collect information in a targeted way and not to forget anything important. And for those who are not particularly comfortable with small talk, concrete questions can make it easier to start a conversation.

These are some examples of questions you could ask.

1. **Questions on discipline or industry-specific topics**
2. **Questions on the organisation of internships, theses, side or student jobs**
  - What tasks do interns usually take on at your company?
  - How do you integrate interns into the daily work routine?
  - How would writing a thesis work in your company?
  - For which tasks do you need working students?
  - How long should an internship ideally be?
3. **Questions about career entry opportunities and requirements**
  - In which fields / divisions could I start as a graduate?
  - What do I need to bring with me to start my career with you?
  - Which requirements are mandatory, negotiable or can be balanced with other strengths?
  - How relevant are foreign and practical experience, languages, IT skills, etc.?
4. **Questions about the application procedure and the selection procedure**
  - How does the personnel selection process work?
  - What do you particularly look for in applicants?
  - When should I apply if I want to start at the >> *date* <<?
5. **Questions on opportunities for career / personal development**
  - How important is a Masters degree for further development in the company?
  - How does the company support its employees?
  - What career development opportunities does the company offer?
  - What could a career in your company look like?

## 6. Questions on careers, jobs or the company culture?

- What does a typical week look like as a >> *job title* <<?
- What are special challenges in the >> *professional field* <<?
- How high is the proportion of teamwork in the work in the >> *subject area* <<?
- What do you like about your work as a >> *job title* <<?
- What kind of person would you (not) recommend the job as >> *job title* << in your company to?
- How would you describe the corporate culture at your company?

### Take notes

Take notes of the people's names you have talk to and the content of your conversation. Being able to track this as well as to match names and companies can still be important – especially if you want to apply afterwards. In addition, new questions or findings may arise that become relevant at a later stage.

### Pay attention to the notices (fair)

At many fairs there is a (digital) wall with current job advertisements. This can serve as initial orientation and provide an answer to the question: Which companies are currently looking for which staff? Should you find what you are looking for, this is a good time to approach the people at the respective stand. Ask for the information you need to decide whether to apply. A good impression in personal contact on a fair and advice on the application procedure you get there can be an advantage in the selection procedure.

### Take you application dossier with you (fair)

#### Would you like to apply for a job advertised by an attending company?

Take advantage of the opportunity that is not available with written applications: Make already a good impression in person. Research whether the company accepts applications during the fair before. Some do not at the fair itself, but before and afterwards and perhaps via the fair website. A joint look at your documents may still be possible. Arrange an appointment in advance if this is possible. Do you find information on the required application documents – at the fair or in the usual manner? Then take these exact documents with you. If you do not find any information on this, you are well equipped with complete application documents.

#### You would like to submit an unsolicited application?

Use the fair to explore the prospects of an unsolicited application for your target position and at the same time promote yourself in personal contact. Because it can vary, whether a speculative application is worthwhile and how quickly you can expect a response to it. The assessment of company representatives can therefore be useful for your individual planning. A good impression in a conversation can lead to your counterpart to stand up for to your application.

If companies are open to speculative applications: Ask which documents are required and to whom you should send your application. To give a first insight into your profile, take a current CV with

you. Integrate a short profile in which you summarise your qualifications, motivation and personality in a few key points or sentences. Also add what you are looking for, e.g. “Objective: 3-month internship in the area of...“. You can place both in the actual CV or on the cover page if you have one. They thus convey additional information that otherwise a cover letter provides.

### **Would you like to know if your application at an attending company would have a chance?**

Then update your CV and take it with you so that you can show it to company representatives if the opportunity arises.

### **Do you just want to get information?**

Nevertheless, situations may arise in which it is useful for you to have an up-to-date version of your CV with you.

### **Prepare a personal presentation (pitch)**

Is there an opportunity to briefly introduce yourself to employers of choice? Very good. Show now that you can focus on the important details about who you are, what you are looking for and what you have to offer. Plan a maximum of 2 minutes for such a self-presentation – also called a pitch. The aim is to demonstrate and concretise suitability: Why do you fit a job, a professional field or the company you are interested in? Why should the company be interested in you? Focus on the fundamental arguments. Even if you are not asked to do so, you can benefit from your preparation in other conversations.

#### **Think about the following aspects:**

- Your name and current status, e.g. Bachelor student in >>*subject*<<, if applicable with a focus
- Motivation / interest in the job, professional field or company, e.g. area of responsibility, activities, products, working methods, market position, technologies
- Examples of your professional and personal fit, such as focal points or modules from your studies, experience from internships or part-time jobs, final theses
- Individual specifics, such as projects, awards, volunteering

Tip 1: On the [Career Service website](#), there is a [Video about “Pitches”](#).

Tip 2: Think about what the common thread in your pitch could be. With a narrative story, listeners can follow you more easily.

### **Choose an appropriate outfit**

Do I have to attend in business look? The events addressed here are professional events with appropriate styling for all involved. This has become more casual in many parts of the professional world in recent years. Nevertheless, select your clothing carefully. On the websites of the companies present, you can get an impression of what style of dress is generally common in a company or an industry. Choose a well-groomed outfit that you feel comfortable in.

## Be open to small talk and networking

Whether you are visiting a trade fair or attending a FH event with potential employers, networking is a goal and small talk is the way to get there. Afterwards, career networks such as XING or LinkedIn make it possible to stay in touch.

**These media could help you:**

- [Video with 3 tips from experts on small talk and networking](#)
- [E-tutorials “Xing for Career Starters” \(Part 1: Designing your profile, Part 2: Job search\)](#)
- Online courses to optimise your LinkedIn profile at [LinkedIn learning](#) (can be retrieved via the library)
- Events dealing with the topics of small talk and networking as well as XING and LinkedIn in the [PLUSPUNKT program](#)

## Learn from events

You will find out that you can benefit from some events more than from others. However, the benefits of a contact do not have to be immediate, but can also become apparent at a later stage. You should view participation as an investment.

Recap the conversations and record your findings. Reflect on your questions and note down new questions for the next opportunities.

- What was informative or particularly interesting?
- Which questions have remained open or have newly arisen?
- What surprised you?
- Where were you particularly successful?
- What would you like to do differently next time?

## Make use of the contact for your application

Would you like to apply afterwards? Then refer to the contact or event in your cover letter.