

Employers, who are recruiting on campus, frequently hold information sessions to provide additional information about their companies and work vacancies. This is an excellent opportunity to make a positive impression on the company representatives. This tip sheet provides advice to prepare for and make the most of your time at these events.

### WHY ATTEND AN INFORMATION SESSION?

The company representatives often play an important role in the resume screening process. They like being able to put faces to the names on applications. Information sessions are an excellent way to gather information about the company, positions available, skills they are seeking and their hiring processes as well as make contacts for the future.

The information you gather can help you decide if you wish to pursue employment with that organization. If you are interested in the company, but not the positions they are currently advertising, consider attending the information session anyway. Recruiters appreciate meeting any students with an interest in their organization and may be able to tell you about their hiring cycles or other opportunities; ask the recruiter about opportunities related to your career interests and find out how to apply.

### WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

The information session will usually start with a presentation by the employer i.e. an overview of the company and specific information about advertised positions. A question and answer period usually follows the presentation. Many companies may serve food and beverages after the presentation and question period. At this point in the session, students have a chance to speak with company recruiters individually or in small groups.

### HOW DO I PREPARE?

To make a positive impression, do your homework!

- Read the job posting carefully, if there is one.
- Research the company and industry thoroughly. Go beyond the organization's website. For more tips check out the Company Research tip sheet as well as additional links at <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/find-employment-resources-links>
- Prepare thoughtful questions to ask in the group and with individual recruiters – having done your research beforehand will help.
- Bring a notebook and pen to take notes – the employers may answer your questions during the presentation or you may think of new questions while you're there.
- Prepare a 30-second business introduction outlining your skills and interests as they relate to the position/company/industry and practice with a friend or family member. Try not to sound too rehearsed – just remember the key points and be prepared to deliver them in a conversational style.
- Have a light snack before you attend so that you will have good mental focus for the reps. Networking while gracefully juggling food and drink can be a challenge.

### WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

During the question and answer period, ask things that are relevant to everyone. For example, you might ask about the future direction of the company or the typical career path for entry-level candidates. Make sure that you do not ask for information that you could get by doing some basic research.

During the mingling part of the session, you may have the opportunity to speak one-on-one with a recruiter. Take this time to ask questions. It shows you have researched the company thoroughly and are aware of industry trends. You should also be ready to talk about why you are interested in the company and the position. When you end your conversation with a recruiter, thank them for their time and ask them for a business card as a way to stay connected. If you have one of your own, offer it to the recruiter (see the networking business card section of this tip sheet for more information). Try to speak to several recruiters, as they can offer different perspectives and may discuss their impressions of students afterwards.

## BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

Making a good impression also includes following the rules of business etiquette. For more information, Quintessential Careers has a collection of quizzes and articles on etiquette at <https://www.livecareer.com/career/advice/jobs/job-hunting-etiquette-tips>

Most importantly:

- Be punctual; arriving late will disrupt the session.
- Dress in business attire, unless otherwise specified. Check out our Dress for Success tips at <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/jobs/resources-links/dress-success>
- Do not monopolize a recruiter's time.
- When you end a conversation, thank the recruiter and ask for a business card.
- Do not ask basic questions about how to apply; this was in the job posting.
- When you ask a question, listen carefully to the response.
- Speak about how your skills fit with the company, not just about yourself in general.
- Always approach a recruiter on your own, and not with a group of friends.
- Be mindful of positive body language to show you're interested and engaged e.g. relaxed posture with a straight back, not crossing your arms, firm handshakes, and maintaining eye contact.

## WHEN FOOD AND DRINK IS SERVED

- Do not take any food until invited to do so.
- While the employer is presenting, try to remain in your seat.
- Take smaller portions, rather than loading up your plate.
- Skip the alcoholic beverages.
- Never take the food and then leave the information session.
- Hold your cup in the left hand so your right hand will be free for handshakes.

## NETWORKING BUSINESS CARDS

It is not always feasible to pass out a handful of resumes at these sessions, as the company will probably be receiving your resume through the regular application process. Instead, you can use networking business cards, which have the look and feel of a traditional business card, and give you the opportunity to provide critical career and contact information with people who you meet in social and professional situations. You can find out more information about networking business cards at <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/sites/files/careers/public/shared/pdf/networking-business-cards.pdf>

## HOW TO FOLLOW UP

If you've collected the contact information of a representative you've spoken with directly, you can send them a thank-you note within 24 hours. In addition, if you are applying for one of their advertised positions, you can mention in your cover letter that you attended the information session. Include the name of the recruiter you spoke with and comment on any relevant information you gathered.

*How to Say It in Your Job Search* available in the Career Resource Library.

## FINDING OUT ABOUT EMPLOYER INFORMATION SESSIONS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Register for employer information sessions or Learn to Network Workshops <https://clnx.utoronto.ca/>
- Review our Company Research or Effective Networking Tip sheet: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/tip-sheets>
- Meet with an *Employment Strategist* or *Career Counsellor* to help prepare: Call 905-828-5451 to book an appointment
- Visit our Career Resource Library for in-person resources like:  
*Work the Pond* by Darcy Rezak (2005)  
*How to Say It in Your Job Search* by Robbie Miller Kaplan (2001)

Please note that this information is subject to change. It is best to refer to the original sources for the most up to date information. (Updated May 2019)