

To the fair, to the fair, we go...

BEFORE YOU GO

■ Be prepared to talk about your experiences, skills and abilities, and why you are keen to join the company. Prepare a "pitch" about yourself. It should not be longer than two minutes.

■ Find out which companies are participating and do research on them. Skip the industries or companies you have no interest in and zoom in on the relevant ones.

■ Prepare different versions of your resumes if you are trying for different types of jobs. Take many copies to the job fair. Your resume should be no more than two pages long and kept in a folder. Refer to The Sunday Times' guide to writing a good resume published on Feb 22.

■ Dress as you would for a job interview, but be comfortable as there may be a lot of walking to do. Some job fairs are huge.

■ Take along passport-sized photographs as they help the recruiters to put a face to the interview.

■ Take along a bag to carry material collected along the way. Collect only what is of interest to you.

This will give recruiters the impression that you are focused and have a clear career goal in mind.

DURING THE FAIR

■ Arrive early to beat the crowd.

■ At the entrance to the fair, you will usually see a layout plan of the booths. Plan your route, using the list of companies that you have prepared, and start making your way to their booths.

■ Spend time to talk to the recruiters from the companies that you are interested in. Run through the "pitch" about yourself with them.

■ Ask the recruiters questions about the opportunities available, what they are looking for in a successful candidate, and what the recruitment process is like. Limit yourself to about five questions. Avoid questions like, "What do you do?" as it shows that you are unprepared. Do not ask about the salary too.

■ Ask the recruiters if they are accepting resumes, and if so, leave yours with them. Before you leave, pick up the company's

recruitment brochure if it is available and get the recruiter's business card.

■ Do not strike out companies with no current vacancies for your particular position. Get the name and contact number of the recruitment manager for future reference.

■ While waiting to be interviewed, make use of the time to network with other job seekers. Ask them for information about the companies that you may not have considered before.

AFTER THE FAIR

■ Within 24 hours of the event, write or e-mail personal thank-you notes to each of the recruiters whom you have met. This is not only courteous but also shows you are really serious about the job.

Tips provided by Ms Teo Siew Poh, recruitment consultant of RecruitPlus Consulting; Mr Tay Kok Choon, country manager of JobStreet Singapore; Mr David Leong, managing director of PeopleWorldwide Consulting; and Ms Lynne Ng, regional director of Adecco South East Asia.