

The National Cyber Summit Job Fair is a terrific opportunity for cyber security pros to meet recruiters and hiring managers from leading employers. This aspect of the Summit gives job seekers access to key contacts all in one room.

To make the most of these opportunities you need to plan ahead and put some strategies into place to create the best possible impression. Whether you're currently seeking a job or scoping out future possibilities, your goal should be to put your best foot forward and network with as many people as possible.

Follow these strategic ideas for job fair success.

Be sure to pre-register

When you pre-register and upload your resume it gives recruiters and hiring managers the opportunity to review your qualifications in advance. Many employers reach out to candidates of interest before the event, to encourage their participation, but not all have the opportunity to do so. Get a leg up on your competition by registering in advance!

Research the employers that will be in attendance

Do your homework. If you're going to be in the same room with hiring companies you should know something about them. Research their company mission, the types of positions they're recruiting, company culture, etc. From that basic research you can target the companies that most interest you and dig deeper into their organization. This is your best chance to get a strong start by making a solid impression. Take the time to make yourself stand out in the crowd. Ask questions; be prepared to have a meaningful conversation. And if you have the time, we encourage you to try to speak with every employer. They may only advertise a small sampling of their opportunities, and you may not realize all the opportunities they may be hiring for.

Bring multiple copies of your resume

Have at least one copy of your resume for every company at the event, and then throw in at least ten extra just to be safe. Have a nice attaché or brief case to keep the resumes clean and crisp. Those extra resumes you bring along should come in handy while you're networking with other event attendees. You never know who may prove to be a valuable contact.

Dress for success

Professional attire is expected for job fairs. You don't have to come in a 3-piece suit or a slick dress with high heels, but you should look polished, neat and career-minded.

Creating a good first impression is vital. If you're transitioning military, your best bet is civilian professional attire, but uniforms and cammies are acceptable too.

Be sure to introduce yourself

A job fair is not the time to be shy. When you approach an employer's table, extend your hand, look the representative in the eye, smile and introduce yourself. Have a resume ready to hand to the recruiter or hiring manager and be prepared to talk about your experience and career goals. Develop a personal introduction or elevator pitch to use for moments like this, and throughout your job search and career.

Be prepared for an interview

If you have submitted your resume in advance or if the recruiter has interest in your skills, be prepared for a more in-depth on-the-spot interview. The recruiter or hiring manager may not have lots of time to spend with you, and that's why it's all the more important to make the most of the situation. A common first question is, "Why are you here today?" or "What are your career goals?" But you never know what might be asked, so tell your success stories and achievements with confidence.

Ask for a business card

You'll be meeting many people and all the names/companies are going to get jumbled in your head. Ask for a business card from the person you speak with. After you walk away, make some notes on the back of the card regarding impressions and what was discussed. Be sure to follow up with the company rep after the event. Thank them for their time and reiterate your interest and career goals.

Network, network, network

In this case, network is a verb. You want to move through the event with confidence and talk with attendees as well as recruiters. One of your goals should be to make as many connections as possible, so take names and make notes. Follow up with everyone after the event and offer to help other job seekers in any way you can. Networking is as much about helping others as it is asking for consideration.

Use these strategic tips to make the most of your National Cyber Summit Job Fair experience.