

everything you need to know about career fair participation

what will I do at a career fair?

Attending a career fair gives you the chance to talk face-to-face with future employees. You will be talking to young people and answering their questions about the HVACR field, any openings your company may have and your company itself. You can almost certainly expect variations of questions like:

- *What do you do all day?*
- *How much money do you make?*
- *What kind of cars do your employees drive?*
- *How did you get into the field?*
- *What does your company make/do?*

Depending on how many students are attending and how many companies are exhibiting, you may find there are times when you have lots of students at your booth and other times when there is no one around. Make sure you are open and professional. Don't ignore the students by talking on your cell or answering emails on your laptop. You are providing a host of first impressions of both your company and your field.

how can I convince my manager that my company should participate in a career fair?

Participating in a career fair provides your company with a way to meet prospective employees. This is your company's chance to start developing a talent pool of young people you can contact when there is an opening at your company. In some cases, attendees will have their resume with them and you can gather these and refer to them when you have a need. Developing a pool of potential candidates is a great way to speed up the hiring process when you do have an opening.

Attending a career fair will also help get your company's name in front of your community. You'll be surprised how many people will tell you something along the lines of, "Oh, so that's what they do over in that building I pass on my way to school every day."

what's the difference between career fairs and job fairs?

career fairs

Career Fairs tend to involve a large number of organizations (employers, schools, colleges, associations). Attendees walk around and visit with exhibitors in an effort to learn more about the organization. For these, have your "elevator pitch" down and be ready to keep it fresh every time you repeat it.

career days

Career Days are usually events sponsored by the school where teachers or administrators invite people to speak to a group of students about their profession. At a Career Day, you can give a more detailed presentation.

job fairs

Job Fairs present employers with an opportunity to talk with potential employees. These candidates usually bring their resumes and discuss open positions with recruiters. This audience will likely be the most engaged, so be prepared for more in-depth questions. It's a good idea to have a job description and applications available.

are there fees to participate?

There is usually no cost to participate in a career fair. If you are attending a combination job fair and career fair, there could be a charge. Job fairs usually do charge a fee to participate. We have seen fees range from \$50 up to \$250 if you want to advertise or cosponsor the event. There are also for-profit groups that sponsor job fairs. Fees to attend these can be as high as \$2,000.

how do I find a career fair to attend?

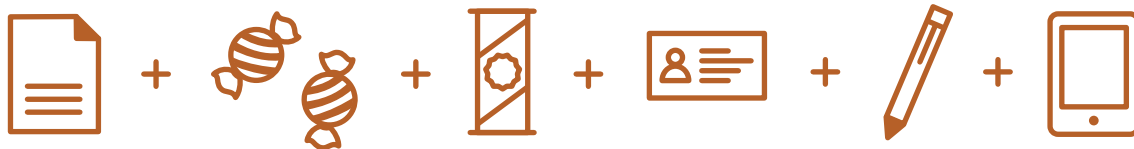
If you have children or grandchildren who are in high school or community/vocational college, then you already have a source for information on career fairs. Just have your kids ask their teachers when the next one is being held and who is in charge. This also applies to coworkers or neighbors' kids; have them ask and provide you the contact information. Then give the person in charge a call to find out what you need to do to participate.

If you don't have someone "on the inside," you can still get information. Check out the websites of high schools and community/technical colleges in your area. There is not one location for information on career fairs. We've found this info on school websites under Administration, Student Services, Events, Calendar of Events, Career Services, Counseling, etc. For high schools, contact the principal or assistant principal. For community colleges, the dean of student services is a good place to start.

HARDI will work with you to find an event in your area. If you want to participate, contact us by email or phone at hardimail@hardinet.org or 614.345.4328

what do I need to bring?

- Information handouts on your company to put your company name in the hands of potential job candidates.
- Giveaways or candy —everyone loves these. It will get people to stop and talk.
- Examples of the products you stock. They are great conversation starters and these, along with your explanations, will help students better understand.
- Banner stands and a table cloth can be provided by HARDI, to create an attractive booth with a clear message.
- Business cards—you can provide them to students you feel are good candidates for future employment.



what about after the career fair is over?

Make sure you thank the people you have been dealing with. If you had a positive experience, inquire about their next career fair. If you are interested in making a presentation to a class about industrial distribution, let your contact know.

Or, you might want to bring a group of students to your company and show them around. HARDI can work with you on this, too. Download [HARDI's How To Guide: Giving a Company Tour](#).

If you have contact information or a resume from students, make sure you follow up with them. Drop them a note, and tell them you enjoyed meeting them and will give their information to your human resource department. Tell them more about your company. The student will be very impressed with you and your company; this will get you some great word-of-mouth advertising.

Do a brief evaluation of the event. Write down what worked well or something you would do differently at the next event.