

# How to Work a Career Fair



Presented by Bob Dolan [dolanb@mit.edu](mailto:dolanb@mit.edu)

# MIT Spring Career Fair 2016

Wed April 6th, 11:00am-4pm

## Johnson Athletic Center, MIT, Cambridge

Register at: **<https://springcareerfair.mit.edu/#/>**

Use your MIT and/or Harvard email addresses

Wonderful opportunity to talk about yourself  
and your work with employers

# MIT Spring Career Fair 2016

## Wed April 6th, 11:00am-4pm

### Johnson Athletic Center, MIT, Cambridge

- Once you have registered using your MIT and/or Harvard email addresses, upload your Resume/CV
- All employers will get a copy of the Resume Book a few days before the Career Fair...many will do key word searches to find you
- Employers who can't be present on Apr 6<sup>th</sup> will also be able to purchase a copy of the Resume Book

What are they wearing?





It can get a little crowded down each pathway

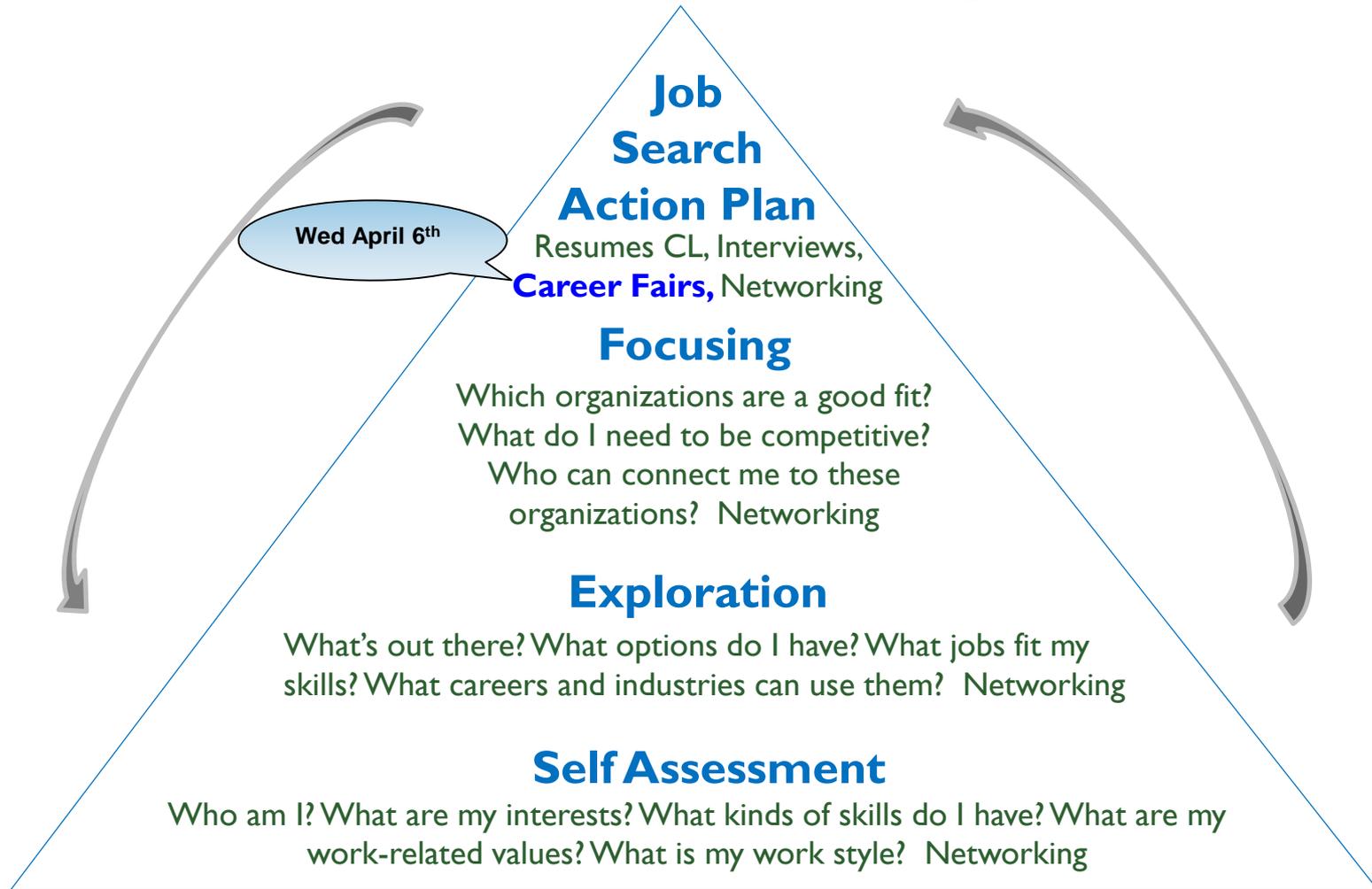
# Purpose of a Career Fair

Can be different for everybody

**Career Fairs provide opportunities for:**

- **Job and internship search**
- **Professional development/clarity**
- **Communication skill practice**
- **Employer feedback**
- **Networking – develop contacts, learn about a field, occupation or industry**
- **Leadership experience (as a career fair organizer)**

# The Career Planning Process



Adapted from Peter Fiske: modified from Stanford University Career Planning and Placement Office

# Career Fair Steps

## Three Considerations:

1. Preparation
2. Strategy at the Fair
3. Follow-up

# Your Resume/CV

## CONFESSIONS OF THE RECRUITMENT INDUSTRY

TOP SECRET



applications received  
**200**  
seconds after a job is posted



average time spent looking at a CV is  
**5-7**  
seconds



**17%**  
chance that your cover letter will be read

Tpyos r wicked badd



**1**  
spelling or grammar mistake and your CV will be thrown in the trash can

**68%**  
of employers will find you on Facebook



**76%**  
of CV's are ignored if your e-mail address is unprofessional



**88%**  
job rejection rate if you have a photo of yourself on your CV

an average of  
**250**  
CV's are received for each job position

**89%**  
of businesses planned to use social media networks for recruitment in 2011



86%  
LinkedIn



60%  
Facebook



50%  
Twitter

LinkedIn  
Now 96%

No Photo  
in U.S.

**1 in 3**  
employers rejected candidates based on something they found about them online

**427k**  
CV's are posted on Monster every week. That is approx the population of Luxembourg



Use Good Judgment  
Now 42%

collected by b behind

# Career Fair Steps

## What does it mean to be prepared in a career-fair context?

- It means knowing yourself and your prospective employers
  - Do some Introspection and self-assessment before the fair
- You have to invest time, energy, and possibly some anguish in figuring out what you want to do with your life (or at least your next step in life)
- Working out effective answers to several key questions is the first step:
  - What type of job are you looking for right now?
  - What do you see yourself doing in 3-5 years?
  - What skills and abilities can you offer an employer?
  - What evidence can you provide for the quality of your work?

# Career Fair Steps

## What does it mean to be prepared in a career-fair context?

- Employers hire scientists/engineers/people who know what they want
- Interviewers can sense your lukewarm interest, or worse, they might not sense it and you might get a job you don't especially want...not a promising strategy for a rewarding career
- So...
  - What kind of research have you carried out?
  - What experimental techniques have you mastered?
  - Are you willing to relocate, and if so, where?
  - When can you start?
  - Why are you interested in our company?
  - The dreaded: "Tell me about yourself." (TMAY)

# Preparation

## Be Presentable:

- One of the keys to getting any job is to present *yourself* with the same meticulous care that you present your work
- Companies need employees with great technical skills and training, *and* with great social and group skills
- The career fair is a recruiter's first opportunity to judge you not just as a scientist/engineer/professional, but also as a potential colleague
- And no one wants to work with someone who... well can't comb their hair or button their shirt up straight

# Preparation

## Be Presentable:

### To make a good first impression you must:

- Dress professionally...business casual is typical, no jeans or t-shirts. For men, a tie never hurts
- Women (and men!) should dress well but not provocatively: Save the sexy outfits for the dance floor

# Preparation

## Your Goal:

- Employment - What type?
- Exploration - What's out there?
- Exploration - Where might I fit?

## Your Resume/CV:

- General Resumes/CV's
- Targeted Resumes/CV's
- No Resume/CV – meet first, Resume/CV later

# Strategy - Navigating the Fair

## Know which companies are coming:

1. Career Fair Website App: Go to your Apple or Droid App Store and Download “Fairsey”
2. Once downloaded, select the “MIT Spring Career Fair” option provided for 2016.
  - Review company web sites/mission statements/jobs
  - Which ones are you targeting?
  - Review floor plan to find employers
  - Generate questions to ask

# Strategy - Navigating the Fair

## Strategy at the Fair:

- Get the floor plan (walk it before you meet)
- Can either visit targeted companies first, or can practice first, then visit targeted companies
- Pay attention to the length of company lines
- Listen to the conversation ahead of you

# Do's...

- Bring extra copies of your Resume/CV
- Dress professionally
- Don't arrive to late
- Make eye contact
- Introduce yourself with a handshake and a smile
- Be direct and to the point
- Pick up company literature
- Get contact information for company reps
- Ask about the next steps
- Be enthusiastic!

## Don'ts...

- Don't just grab giveaway items
- Don't shuffle by without talking to the company rep
- Don't ask questions that could be answered by reading the company literature or web site
- Don't ask the recruiter "How could you use someone like me at your company?"
- Don't tell the recruiter you would be willing to do anything
- Don't discuss personal issues

# Develop Your Script

**Develop a 30-60 second introduction to use with prospective employers**

**Include:**

- **Your name**
- **Your program at MIT**
- **When you're graduating (or your completion date)**
- **If a Postdoc, when you plan to finish**
  - **Possibly a response to why industry vs. academia**
- **Your area of interest and how your background relates to that area**

# Example...

**Hello. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I will be graduating with a bachelor's in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science in June 2016. Last summer I did an internship in the IT division of (an investment bank).**

**I would like to broaden my experience in this area, and I read that your company develops software products for the finance/investment industry. I'd like to find out about career opportunities in your company that would use both my IT background and my experience in an I-Banking environment.**

*Smile* 



*Eye to Eye Contact*

# Example...

Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I will complete my PhD/Postdoc at MIT in June and I'm pursuing opportunities in the area of cancer research. For the last two years I collaborated across several labs to identify a novel bacterial cell cycle checkpoint induced by starvation. I also investigated the physiological changes of starving bacterial cells which resulted in a recent publication.

I would like to broaden my experience in this area, and I read that your company developed a method that examined how DNA damaging agents alter the mitochondrial metabolism and mitochondrial DNA of cells. I'd like to find out about career opportunities in your company that would use both my science background and my experience in collaborative lab environments

Smile 



*Eye to Eye Contact*

# Pre Interviewing Prep

## ***“Tell me about yourself”***

- Consider responding in the following manner
  - I am a .....
  - With interest/expertise in .....
  - I have had project work on; internships in; worked for.....
  - My strengths include *skill, skill, skill*

**Your 30-60 second response should highlight your skills and competencies, specifically in their areas of interest**

# TMAY Response

Tell Me About Yourself (30 seconds)

**Actual example of an MIT M.Eng targeting an I.T. role at Google:**

**I am a** candidate for a Masters in Engineering in Computer Science & Electrical Engineering and will graduate in June 20xx.

**My areas of interest** are in software development and systems design. My expertise is focused on understanding the user's needs, and to provide solutions to solve problems, improve product quality or increase productivity in the workplace.

**I interned with** IBM and was a member of the research team that designed, prototyped, and implemented a successful multi-user enterprise web application to visualize and manage collaborative projects and work activities. Additionally, I was able to strengthen my skills in Java and JavaScript and work closely with highly experienced, world-class engineers.

**I have additional strengths** in natural language processing, artificial intelligence, distributed computing and proficient with Windows environments, C++, information retrieval and TCP/IP. I will also complete my BS in Mathematics upon graduation this June.

**Note: Words underlined appeared in the actual job description**

# TMAY Response

Tell Me About Yourself

**I am a** Post Doctoral Fellow at MIT with expertise in optogenetics/biophotonics.

**My areas of interest** are in optics, microscopy and image processing/analysis, with particular emphasis on the technical requirements related to optogenetic applications.

**I have worked** in several labs and have lead teams in the design and implementation of hardware necessary to grow the biophotonics capabilities with a specific focus on optogenetics. I have also had access to a broad range of sophisticated instruments and assisted in the design and construction of new hardware/software to develop unique and customized imaging capabilities.

As a Scientist at the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and Laboratory for Nuclear Science at MIT, my research has enabled me to develop additional skills in EthoVision XT, video tracking, behavioral patterns, operant conditioning, and exploratory behavior.

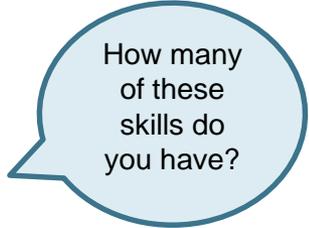
# The Company's Perspective

## They want you to:

- Know what you're interested in
- Know basic company information
  - What the company does
  - What type of positions they offer
  - You may learn some of this from their literature at the Career Fair
  - Many hold info sessions before the fair
- Show interest in the company

# How Employers Rate Candidate Skills/Qualities

- Ability to communicate verbally (internally and externally) 4.63
- Ability to work in a team structure 4.62
- Ability to make decisions and solve problems 4.49
- Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work 4.41
- Ability to obtain and process information 4.34
- Ability to analyze quantitative data 4.21
- Technical knowledge related to job 3.99
- Proficiency with computer software programs 3.86
- Ability to create and/or edit written reports 3.60
- Ability to sell or influence others 3.55



5-point scale, where 1 = Not Important and 5 = Extremely Important

Let's take a moment and identify every skill you have on this list...

# Sample Phrases to Communicate Your Team-Collaboration-Leadership Abilities

- *This project was very collaborative and was a cross lab initiative, this is what we did...*
- *The project was multi-disciplinary and we worked with several engineers and scientist, the work focused on...*
- *I led this project and had three Chemist working with me on my team. We....*
- *I led this project team which created a model to calculate the diffusion coefficients and Brownian dynamics of DNA origami structures in collaboration with researchers from MIT and Harvard. We determined...*

**Also Very Effective for Interview Presentations**

# Strategy for Follow Up

## Get recruiter contact information

- Name, title, email, phone
- Ask for their business card
- Write notes on back of card (i.e. content of conversation)
- Send Resume/CV and cover letter afterwards
- Establish a relationship with company reps
  - You may meet again –
    - Many do on-campus interviews

# Your Resume/CV

- Be prepared to handout your Resume/CV at the Fair
  - **Many employers will ask you to apply on-line, but bring your Resume/CV anyway**
- Important to make sure this document presents your skills and experiences in an effective and engaging way
  - Does your document link your skills to their needs?
  - Does your document highlight your accomplishments?
    - Is it action/results oriented?
    - Does it have quantifiable measurements?
    - Does it highlight your behavioral attributes?

# PAR Statements

Using **PAR** Statements can greatly strengthen the content of your Resume/CV

- **P**roject – What was the **p**roject/challenges/tasks?
- **A**ctivities/Actions – What **a**ctions did you take?
- **R**esults – What were the positive **r**esults?

**STAR** – **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult

**CAR** – **C**hallenge, **A**ction, **R**esult

*whatever works for you*

# Content - Message

The way you express yourself in written form will be evaluated by the readers and will unveil your thought process

- Consider using the following format when describing your skills:

PAR Statement (**P**-Project, **A**-Action, **R**-Results)

Example:

**Project** = In-vitro 3D human small intestine modeling

**Action** = As Project Manager, performed fabrication techniques

**Result** = Developed fabrication technique of the mold

Transfer to Resume/CV as Accomplishment Statement:

***Managed project team that developed fabrication technique of the mold with precise shape and density of human small intestinal villi and invented the first in-vitro 3D human small intestine model***

# Sample PAR Statements

- **Before** – Work included research on interface sensitive behavior of materials
  - **After**- Collaborated with lab teams to develop experimental and theoretical research on interface sensitive behavior of materials by using innovative triborheometry fixture/design
- 
- **Before** – Worked on diffusion coefficients and Brownian dynamics of DNA origami structures
  - **After** – Led project team to create a model to calculate the diffusion coefficients and Brownian dynamics of DNA origami structures in collaboration with researchers from MIT and Harvard

*Don't list what you were supposed to do, list what you did!*

# Sample PAR Statements

- **Before** – Responsible for merger and acquisition due diligence which included financial and sensitivity analysis
  - **After**- Performed comprehensive M&A due diligence and financial analysis including management evaluation, historical results, sensitivity analysis, and relative company valuation materials
- 
- **Before** - Responsible for improving reliability of optical networks
  - **After** – Developed and optimized a lightpath diversity scheme that achieved instantaneous response to multiple network failures for ultra-reliable optical networks, leading to a more reliable product

*Don't list what you were supposed to do, list what you did!*

# Focus on Accomplishments

**Consider what you did in a job/activity where you:**

- Improved the work process
- Worked in a collaborative environment
- Solved a complex problem
- Led the project team to a successful outcome
- Helped increase the quality of the product/service that the company or lab produces
- May have thoroughly satisfied a customer
- Helped reduce the costs of a product/service that the company delivers
- Helped increase the sales and/or profits of the company
- Was of value to others
- Might be similar to your potential employer's needs

**Now it's time to prepare...**

# How to Work a Career Fair Final Q&A

*“The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark”*

*Buonarroti*

# Career Resources

**MIT Career Development Center – E39-305**

**617- 715 - 5329 <http://web.mit.edu/career/www/>**

**Postdocs see Bob Dolan in E25-143G**

We offer...

- One on One counseling
- Mock Interviews (behavioral based)
- Resume/CV and Cover Letter reviews
- Job/Internship Search tips
- Negotiating Job Offer advice
- General and Tailored Workshops
- Prehealth Advising
- Daily drop-in hours (M-F 1:00pm-5:00pm 5-118 ..sorry no postdocs)
- Plus a lot of other wicked good stuff !!!

**Take Advantage of these Resources...We Work for You**

# MIT Career Services for Postdoctoral Scholars

In collaboration with the GECD and the Office of the Vice President for Research, our mission is to provide current MIT Postdoctoral Scholars (Postdoctoral Fellows and Associates) initial guidance and encourage self-management of career exploration including job search strategies for both industry and academic tracks.

## Career Appointments

- Please schedule an appointment for CV/Resume review, interviewing strategies, and other career related topics such as career exploration, job search strategies, networking and considering job offers. Please note that Postdocs are not eligible for Drop-In services.
- To make an appointment, login to CareerBridge
  - <https://www.myinterfase.com/mit/student/>
- Find the link "**Make an Appointment**" on the left side of the page,
- Select "**Postdoc Appointments**" in the drop-down menu
- Select "**Filter by Date Range**"
- Postdoc appointments are with Bob Dolan in **E25-143G**

## Something to Consider

Researchers surveyed 554 full-time working professionals who earned more than \$50K in income and were employed by companies with at least 50 employees. The researchers asked the survey participants about the use of smartphones in formal and informal meetings to uncover attitudes about answering calls, writing or reading emails or text messages, browsing the Internet, and other mobile phone-related behaviors. Key findings include the following:

- 86% think it's inappropriate to answer phone calls during formal meetings
- 84% think it's inappropriate to write texts or emails during formal meetings
- 75% think it's inappropriate to read texts or emails during formal meetings
- 66% think it's inappropriate to write texts or emails during **any meeting**
- 22% think it's inappropriate to use phones during **any meeting**

Survey conducted by University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business, Jan 2014

Source: Talent Smart – Premier Provider of Emotional Intelligence