

TOP 8 TIPS FOR **SUCCESS!**  
AT THE  
2017 BIOMEDICAL PHD CAREER FAIR

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- 1-

# DO YOUR RESEARCH

- Research the **COMPANY**

- Go through the company's website so that you can understand
  - a) the type of organization (e.g., pharmaceutical company vs. contract research organization (CRO))
  - b) the mission of the company
  - c) the types of jobs available that interest you
  - d) news-worthy developments, accolades, initiatives taking place at the company
- Think about the ways in which your skills / interests / goals align with the company, and be prepared to articulate why you are a good fit for the company.

- Research the **REPRESENTATIVE**

- The employer profiles will note the names of the reps attending the fair. Take some time to know their background – some may even be JHU alumni!
- Is the rep a scientist or from HR/recruitment?

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# HONE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

- A **WEAK** pitch is one that
  - Shows lack of awareness of the company and/or the person to whom you are speaking
  - Does not articulate what you are looking for
  - Is not specific to the company

## EXAMPLE

*"Hi! My name is Jane Science and I am a fourth-year immunology graduate student.  
I would like to work in an industry setting.  
I don't know much about ABC Biotech. Can you tell me about it?"*

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# HONE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

- A **STRONG** pitch is one that
  - Shows you have researched the company and understand what they do
  - Articulates what you are looking for (a full-time job, exploring opportunities for down the road, an internship, etc.)
  - Connects your experience, what you are looking for, and how these experiences and goals fit into the company
  - Quickly highlights a strength that sets you apart from other candidates

## EXAMPLE

*"Hi! My name is Jane Science and I am very interested in the growth taking place at ABC Biotech in the realm of immunotherapy. My thesis research at the interface of cancer and epigenetics allowed me to hone my skills in molecular biology, in vivo mouse models, and bioinformatics. I excel at project management and will be one of the first PhD students in my class to graduate. I am on track to have my PhD in the next 3 to 6 months and would love to hear more about opportunities that might be available at that time."*

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## DRESS TO IMPRESS (or at least better than you would in the lab)

- For **ALL**
  - Business casual attire is appropriate; this means...
- For **MEN**
  - Nice pants (ironed!)
  - Button down shirt (also ironed!)
  - Sport coat and/or tie optional
  - No lab coat
- For **WOMEN**
  - Nice pants, skirt, or dress (ironed – notice a trend?)
  - If wearing pants or skirt, choose a professional-looking blouse, top, or button down shirt
  - Avoid short skirts, low-cut shirts, tight clothes
  - No lab coat

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# MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

- Give a **strong handshake** when introducing yourself
- Be **positive**! People like to work with co-workers who are positive 😊
- **Project confidence**. You can do so by following tips 1, 2, and 3!
- And **make good eye contact**
- **Avoid** the following:
  - Saying “um” or “like” frequently (or any other type of filler word)
  - Chewing gum (we will have mints if you are worried about coffee breath!)
  - Lots of fidgeting

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## BRING COPIES OF YOUR RESUME

- Start the conversation with your elevator pitch / career goals; don't begin by handing the rep a copy of your resume
- Offer your resume if asked to provide one OR....
- Ask at the end of the conversation – especially a conversation that has been a particularly good one – if you can leave a copy of your resume with the employer
- If you have business cards, you can share those, as well

### EXAMPLE

*"I really enjoyed speaking with you and am excited about the opportunities available at ABC Biotech. May I give you a copy of my resume so that you can keep me in mind should the right opportunity arise?"*

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## “...BUT I’M NOT READY TO APPLY FOR A JOB”

- The Career Fair is still a great opportunity to explore your options!
- Use the event as an opportunity to
  - **Build your network** and meet employers
  - Gather details about **what the company looks for in a potential hire**
  - **Learn about different types of opportunities** that a company has to offer so that you can target your search when it comes time to look for a job

### EXAMPLE

*“Hi! My name is Jane Science and I am a second-year immunology graduate student. Although I obviously have a few years before I will be applying for full-time positions, I am very interested in ABC Biotech and your initiatives in the immunotherapy space. Can you tell me a bit more about where you think the company is heading in the next 5 years? What skills does ABC Biotech seek in new PhDs? I would like to prepare myself to be a competitive candidate.”*



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## THE FOLLOW UP

- If you spoke with an employer and are particularly interested in finding a job at that company – either now or down the road – **it's important to stay in touch**
- **Politely ask for a business card from the rep**, and take notes on the back regarding your conversation
- **Email the rep the rep after the event or connect over LinkedIn**; your note can be brief, but thank them for their time and cite one or two specific things that you took away from the conversation, that you like about the company, or that excite you about working there

### EXAMPLE

*Dear Dr. Biotech,*

*Thank you for taking the time to speak with me at Hopkins' Biomedical PhD Career Fair last month. I enjoyed our chat and hearing your thoughts on how my bioinformatics skill set might be of use to ABC Biotech. As you know, I will be graduating in the next 3-6 months and am very excited about the opportunities available at ABC. I look forward to staying in touch as graduation nears.*

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## THE FOLLOW UP

- If it will be a while before you actually apply for a job, you can **check in with the rep from time to time if you have news to share** – a new publication or simply to mention that you read about the company in the news and are impressed by their work

### EXAMPLE

*Dear Dr. Biotech,*

*Thank you for taking the time to speak with me at Hopkins' Biomedical PhD Career Fair in August of last year. I enjoyed our chat and hearing about the skills that ABC Biotech looks for in its applicants. I recently read in the Washington Post that ABC Biotech acquired XYZ Pharmaceutical – congratulations! I look forward to reading more about the direction of ABC and remain very interested in the company as I work toward completing my PhD.*

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## HAVE FUN!

- Employers are looking forward to meeting each of you!
- You are all bright, talented, and exceptionally qualified students – let that show!
- Don't forget to let your own personality shine through
- Just think.... the Career Fair may lead to your dream job!