

# Career Center

## Plan Your Introduction To Make a Confident First Impression

Employers have only a little time to get to know potential candidates. At a career fair, you can stand out from the crowd by preparing a thoughtful introduction that begins to address three key elements all managers, recruiters and co-workers want to see.

**Strengths: Can you do the work?**

How do your knowledge, skills, and aptitudes connect to the work that they'll ask you to do.

**Motivation: Do you care about our work?**

How are you invested in the core topics and challenges that frame their work.

**Fit: Can we work with you?**

How will you thrive in their work environment? How will you connect with their work culture?

Adapted from Forbes.com, "Top Executive Recruiters Agree There Are Only Three True Job Interview Questions", George Bradt, April 2, 2011.

### First: Decide what is important

Consider what will be the most interesting and relevant information you can share with employers and recruiters. Brainstorm how elements of your strengths, motivation, and fit align with the employer and role you're interested in.

Strengths	Motivation	Fit



## Second: Choose your focus and format

These sample introductions demonstrate different ways you can structure your introduction and what information you can include. If you're not sure which one to pick, write some notes on what each sample does well, and then see if you can replicate those strong points using your own story.

### Strengths:

#### **I can do the work.**

Hello, my name is Joanna Fields, and I'm interested in a data science career at Quintiles. I have eight years of experience using data analysis and statistical tools, chiefly R, Python, MySQL, and some C++. Using this skill set, I've worked on a diverse set of problems, including financial performance analysis during an internship at Siemens and a systems approach to understand how to capture solar energy during my PhD research at Duke. I was also part of a cross-functional team that made it to the finals at Duke DataFest, in which we examined how customers' use of a website affected sales of cars. Now that you know some of my background, I have a few questions that I'd like to ask you.

### Motivation:

#### **I care about the work.**

Good morning. I'm GiGi Ramirez. Education is my passion, and my recent summer position with the Duke TIP High School Innovations Program has strengthened my desire to teach secondary history education in an innovative, project-based school. As a PhD in art history with an undergraduate degree in mathematics, I have an interdisciplinary teaching philosophy that aligns with your mission of weaving math and writing throughout the curriculum. I would greatly enjoy sharing my experiences and sample lesson plans with you. How can we connect?

### Fit:

#### **You can work with me.**

It's nice to meet you. My name is Benji Harrison and I know some people who work at Cvent. I'm impressed with your commitment to positive company culture and the different awards you've received. One of the key elements I'm looking for after I finish my PhD in political science is that I want more interaction with people every day. I also enjoy having analytical problems to solve using data. The pace of work and collaboration at Cvent seem attractive. I'd like to ask you questions about some of your open positions and how I am a good fit.

### Combination:

#### **Strengths, motivation, and fit.**

Hello, my name is Yu Wang and I started the Master's in Economics program this month. I'm interested in your Quant Trading intern position. I already have an undergraduate degree in finance and have scripted in R and Python. I've had two internships, one for a major appliance company and one at a large bank. I am complimented on scripting quickly, and that's why I'm most interested in trading. Pressure and fast-paced work excite me. At Bank of Communications, my colleague and I collaborated to successfully build a survey database. It was powerful to see our analysis influence my boss's decisions, and I like that your interns contribute work to the company immediately. You mentioned using historical data for modeling. What data have the interns had access to?

### Timeline:

#### **Alternatively, you can organize your introduction to go through your present, past, and future.**

Hi, I'm Issam Nasser. I am graduating from the Mechanical Engineering Master's program this year. In addition to an engineering internship, I also completed a postbac research program in anatomy and muscle regeneration. Now I want to draw upon my engineering and biology skill sets, and I'm particularly interested in R&D roles at Stryker to work on joint replacement systems. I have recently been a project manager with DISI, working on an interdisciplinary, start-up collaboration focusing on a novel medical device to be used in developing countries. This has made me more interested in working with a company such as Stryker who is developing cutting edge medical devices for worldwide use. Could you tell me more about current projects at Stryker involving developing countries?

### **Third: Draft the 30-second version of your ideas**

Now that you have some information you want to highlight to employers, you can more easily decide what you want to say in your introduction. While you don't want to read from a script (or sound like you are) when talking to people, writing is a good opportunity to further organize and clarify your thoughts.

Using your notes from the first exercise and the format you chose from the second exercise, draft an introduction that is roughly 30 seconds long (about 150 words). You might be surprised at how brief you need to be.

#### Fourth: Practice saying your introduction to make it sound natural

**Set a timer.** Gauge whether you're excessively long or short. Thirty seconds is arbitrary, but it's a common recommendation. Consider it a comfortable norm for recruiters.

**Use your phone or get feedback from a friend.** You probably have a voice recorder on your phone. Use that to learn what you sound like. Do you sound confident in what you're saying or like you memorized a script?

If working with a friend, colleague, or family member, ask them for specific feedback. Does your introduction flow well? Do you highlight your skills confidently?

#### Fifth: Use this rubric to assess your introduction

	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Highlights important experiences, skills, interests, and values</b>	Mentions experiences but they are not relevant to the employer	Demonstrates important background	Demonstrates your best qualifications and what makes you a unique candidate
<b>Why you are interested in this field/industry, organization, and role</b>	Includes details unimportant to the position or not understood by interviewer	Includes some detail relevant to the position	Tailored to that specific industry, organization, and role
<b>Relevant to employer</b>	Many non-essential details included	Mostly relevant with a couple non-essential details included	Information totally relevant to employer and conveyed with their perspective in mind
<b>Conveys authenticity, confidence, and positivity</b>	Lacks confidence or emphasizes a weakness/negative	Confident and authentic but raises a minor concern for employer	Confidently conveys message and content is authentic and positively focuses on qualifications
<b>Organized/flows</b>	Disorganized answer that is difficult to follow	Follows a clear storyline, perhaps with a detail clarified out of place	Follows a clear storyline and organized to emphasize the task/conflict and your action/skills
<b>Concise</b>	>60 second response	~45 second response	~30 second response
<b>Leads to conversation</b>	Ends without a clear way to start a dialogue with the employer	Transitions into related questions at the end	Transitions into related questions at the end; sets up opportunities for follow-up questions from employer