

# Analyzing Construction Company Recruiting Characteristics at a College Career Fair

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Construction programs throughout the United States are experiencing unprecedented industry demand for their students. The college career fair plays an important role in the recruiting process. Many construction programs hold their own career fairs and attendance for these has been growing in recent years. In fall 2018, more than 95 companies attended the construction management career fair at the McWhorter School of Building Science. In this increasingly competitive environment, those companies seeking to hire graduates or interns seek to distinguish themselves from other companies. Companies and organizations have some choice in both the display materials and personnel they bring to the career fair. Observations of activities at career fairs has identified variations in characteristics of both display materials and personnel among companies recruiting. The problem is how do you objectively characterize the variation between the display materials and personnel that construction companies and organizations bring to construction career fairs. The research objectives are: (1) to identify the characteristics of the display materials that recruiters use at construction career fairs; (2) to identify the characteristics of personnel that companies and organizations bring to construction career fairs; and (3) to identify similarities and differences between display materials and personnel used by companies and organizations at construction career fairs.

The researchers collected data through survey and photography at the Career Fairs. In order to identify the characteristics of display materials, photographs were taken of each career fair participant's designated area. Photographs were then analyzed to identify distinct characteristics of each participant's display materials. These include such characteristics as: Banners, Signs, Project(s) information, Location(s) information, Benefit(s) information, Company Culture illustrated, Use of Technology, Promotional giveaways etc. In order to identify the characteristics of the personnel attending the career fair a survey was administered to all attendees. The survey sought to identify the following characteristics of each company: Geographical location, frequency of participation, number and demographics of recruiters and hiring intent.

This research exercise is the first part of a study to identify those recruiting characteristics of construction companies that resonate favorably with construction management students. By better understanding these characteristics, recruiting companies will be able to develop their display materials and choose their recruiting personnel to better align with the student perspectives. The goal of this study is to provide relevant recruitment and marketing insight to contractors, as well as to educate students on marketing strategies of recruiting companies so the students are able to make more informed decisions regarding employment choices.

At the Fall 2018 Career Fair, 87 companies out of the 99 attending were photographed and analyzed. Preliminary results suggest that the overwhelming majority of participants make use of Banners, Signs, Project(s) information and Promotional giveaways. Fewer participants display Location(s) and Benefit(s) information or display images showing their Company Culture. The fewest number of participants make use of technology as part of their displays. All companies at the Fall 2018 Career Fair (99 total) were invited to participate in the survey and 35 responded (35% response rate). Results indicated companies were sending between one and seven recruiters with a mixture of construction job functions and human resources personnel. The majority of recruiters were graduates of the program and came from either the home or bordering states. Twenty percent of companies were attending for the first time. The investigators will continue the research at the Spring 2019 Career Fair in February through data collection and continued analysis of the data. The goal of the investigators is to publish the complete study with all results in the next year.

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