



## NETWORKING AND PREPARING FOR CAREER FAIR



**AAU CAREER**  
AALBORG UNIVERSITY

# Today's agenda

- Why prepare for the visit
- Preparing for the visit
- Good questions to ask
- At the visit
- After the visit



# Why prepare for company visits?

(Incl. Career Fairs/project cooperation fairs etc.)

- Preparation determines the interest – you receive knowledge which will help you to a better understanding of the company and may inspire both you and the company for future cooperation.
- Enables you to present yourself as knowledgeable about the company, its products or services, as well as the career opportunities being discussed.
- The better prepared you are, the more probable it is that the company will recognize your skills, enthusiasm, drive, motivation, maturity, and thoroughness.



# The Company Perspective

- Does not have insight in your specific study
- Does not know the technical terms
- Writes down your names (in order to remember you)
- Career Fair/project cooperation fair: a lot of companies cooperate with students for their first time



# A good question requires a solid foundation

- Interest in the company's immediate problem or the company itself?
- When researching, do not look for company partners/names – look for knowledge
- Critical reflection
- Relevance to you – and your relevance to them
- Speak company language
- Argue respectfully for a problem you see in the company
- Listen – what do the companies say?
- Be open to questions
- Don't underestimate "I don't know" situations – you will not lose face in Denmark if you do not know the answer immediately



# Four important questions

1. What is the problem?
2. Why is it a problem?
3. For whom is it a problem?
4. How can the problem be solved?



# FOUR IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. **What is the problem?**
2. Why is it a problem?
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# What is the problem/challenge?

- **Define the problem area** – e.g. in the public area, health, specific according the industries etc.
- **Define the problem as a question** – PBL way of dealing with the problem
- **Desk research:**
  - Annual reports
  - LinkedIn - Writing/Talking with former students who are now employed by the company – use e.g. LinkedIn – My network/find alumni – write to company 😊
  - Facebook
  - Big projects/investments
  - Websites
  - Media – e.g. Børsen (business newspaper)
  - NN markedsddata: <http://erhverv.nnmarkedsdata.dk.zorac.aub.aau.dk/Content/Profile/ProfileEdit.aspx>
  - Visiting the company's website for research purposes and to obtain a better understanding of the corporate culture – e.g. their newsletter
  - Industry and business publications containing information about the company
  - Talking to people who have had direct dealing with the company or its products





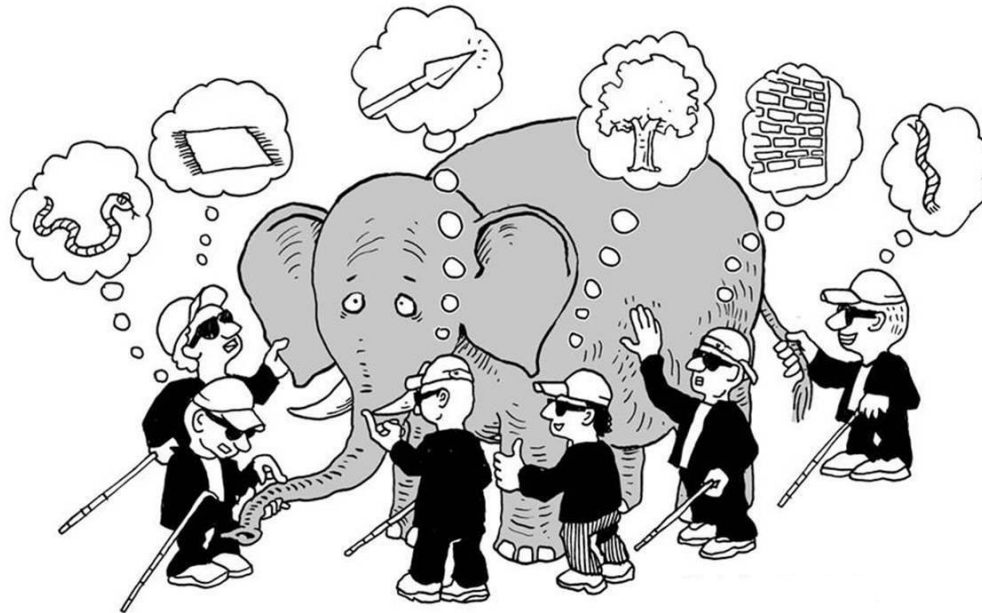
# What is the problem/challenge?

- **Take the position of the company** – ask questions again
  - How would competitors see the problem?
- **After desk research:**
  - Has the problem changed?
  - Should it be limited to or based on the new knowledge and understanding?
  - Try to make a dull problem/company into  something exciting! E.g. production of truss  😊.
  - Focus on processes, don't only go for the sexy topics or companies 😊



# Different perspectives, different observations

- Do you see the problem as components or as a whole?
- Be careful not to judge the company by your first impression
- Change perspective to see the problem from a different angle



# It is a question of a question

- With questions we reveal ourselves
  - Your questions reveal your interest – and also a potential lack of preparation
- The more prepared you are, the better the questions - and the more valuable the questions will be in search of the problem



# FOUR IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. What is the problem?
- 2. Why is it a problem?**
3. For whom is it a problem?
4. How can the problem be solved?



## Why is it a problem?

Describe the problem with your own words and technical terms – however, make it understandable.

Which work areas does the problem include and affect?

How does the problem fit with the company's core area and expertise?



# FOUR IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

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2. Why is it a problem?
- 3. For whom is it a problem?**
4. How can the problem be solved?



# For whom is it a problem?

- Is it the company's own, internal problem...
  - ... or is it the problem of an external target group...
  - ... or is it an overall societal problem?
- 
- Target group: citizens/customers, the whole company, departments, the environment.
  - Different target groups = different framings of the problem/customers/clients.
  - Some are difficult to make more visible, such as CSR in a company.



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2. Why is it a problem?
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- 4. How can the problem be solved?**





# How can the problem be solved?

- Listen to the company's suggestion.
- Does the dialogue present new perspectives on the problem?
- When you meet a company, e.g. at the Career Fair:
  - Solution should not be found that day
  - Avoid going into "solution-mode"
  - Instead of risking being too cocky by having the solution right there, you can be curious to know more and reflect



# Dialogue with the company

- **Translate the company's problem to your own professional competence**
  - The company should not feel misunderstood based on their professional competences. They have lots of expertise in their field.
  - Make sure to explain what you do in your field of study such a project works, exams etc.
  - Show them your CV, tell about your work assignments and competences – give examples! Such as interviews, test in the lab, case studies – look for these words in the study program, **guide of competences (in Danish – however very hands-on and understandable for companies <http://www.karriere.aau.dk/virksomheder-og-organisationer/kompetence-uddannelsesguiden/>) and study guide, study websites etc.**
- Remember to use company language
- Translate problems from less interesting companies to more exiting problems!



# Dialogue with the company

- Cultural and language skills – if you are an international student
  - Make sure to mention your extra skills compared to the Danish students. Do not underestimate your cultural and language skills and how these can be used in the company
  - Sometimes, nationality is not even visible in the CV
- What can you offer the company?
  - Semester cooperation, Master thesis, internship, study job, fulltime job etc.





# GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK – BESIDES THE MORE ACADEMIC AND STUDY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- Corporate goals and direction
- Career enhancement
- Market growth opportunities
- Company's competitive environment
- Research and development
- Evaluation system
- Career paths of recent hires
- Commitment to training
- Social gathering between management and/or colleagues
- Community lifestyles



# NOT SO GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK AT YOUR FIRST MEETING 😊

- How many vacation days do I get?
- Are the working hours flexible?
- What benefits does the company offer?
- Will I have to work overtime or weekends?
- How much will I get paid if I get the job?



## AT THE VISIT

- Be professional – manners and personal appearance
- Be interested
- Be timely
- Be kind and personal
- CV vs. Biz cards
- Address language issue if relevant





Following the visit, no later than 1 week, send a personal email of thanks to the key people you met and talked with during the day. While this may not affect the probability of getting an offer, it is a common courtesy and will definitely be remembered if you eventually accept their offer.

Content:

- This email should reaffirm interest in the position.
- Highlight what value your qualifications bring to the company.
- If applicable, indicate any items of discussion that were not mentioned during the office visit.
- Reflect your enthusiasm and highlight your in-depth understanding of the contribution you can make as a member of their team.

The email provides you with one last opportunity to stand out above the competition and position yourself for a potential offer.



**MAKE SURE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CAREER  
EVENTS – SIGN UP HERE:**

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