Having been to a few career fairs recently, I’ve made some observations that I’d like to share. Some of these are best practices that if followed, would help students leave a positive impression, and a hiring manager remember candidates better:

1. **Dress formally:** A meeting at a career fair is like the first interview. If you’re in school, looking for a job, and visiting various company booths, make sure you’re dressed appropriately. Wear a dress shirt, a tie, formal trousers, and good shoes. A suit helps, but is not necessary. You need to form a good first impression.

2. **Be well-groomed:** It’s surprising to see how many grads don’t give this enough importance. Be clean shaven. No stubble. It’s fine to have a well-groomed beard. And comb your hair!

3. **Be polite:** This goes without saying, but always be polite to potential employers. There is no way you’d get a job by being rude.

4. **Never ask about the pay:** Money is an important factor in a job. But the career fair is not the place to ask about it. It gives recruiters the impression that you care more about the salary than the job, and that you’d leave once you find a better-paying job. You don’t need to leave that lasting impression on the recruiters’ minds.

5. **Don’t ask “what does your company do?”:** Oracle isn’t a B2C company, and we got several applicants that asked us who we are. I don’t expect grads in the Arts or English departments to organically know who we are. But everyone has a smartphone these days. Just Google the employer!! It will impress the recruiters.

6. **Have an attractive resume:** By that I mean, have something on your resume that would catch a hiring manager’s eye and help them remember you later. Put your bragging rights. ..Oh, and never ever approach an employer’s booth without a resume. No excuses. Print one and come back.

7. **No hangovers:** This deserves it's own bullet point. I've seen grads walk up to us, clearly with a hangover. We will NOT hire you. Period.

8. **Come back:** If you find an opportunity really attractive, come back before the booth wraps up. That’s usually a slow time. Take this opportunity to make a stronger impression with the recruiters. They will remember to call you first.

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**Disclaimer:** All views/opinions are my own and not those of my employer.