

# Make an impression

## WHAT YOUR BODY LANGUAGE SAYS ABOUT YOU

From the moment an interviewer sees you, he or she forms an impression about what sort of person you are and what kind of employee you would make. This is because even when we are not speaking, we are communicating. The way we move, our gestures and what we wear, all say something about who we are.

An interviewer will generally form a strong impression during the first sixty seconds of the interview. First impressions are predominantly based on body language and appearance. Only seven per cent of interviewers focus on the words we use as a basis for forming the first impression.

Here are some suggestions to help you appear more confident:

### **Make an Entrance**

Traditionally a daunting place, the interview room represents hostile territory, and we tend to slow our walking pace when entering an unknown area. Slowing down however, can suggest reluctance or a lack of confidence. Rather than entering the room at full speed, or dawdling make a point of just pausing at the door before entering at a confident pace.

### **The Handshake**

Firm but friendly is the best way. Nobody likes a limp handshake which can suggest a weak character, but neither is it recommended that you remove the interviewer's hand at the wrist. This can denote over-confidence, or even arrogance.

### **The Eyes**

Eye contact is vital, but it should not be performed to excess. A trick to maintaining eye contact is to use the business gaze. Imagine there is a triangle on the other person's forehead. By keeping your gaze directed at this area, you create a serious atmosphere and the other person senses that you mean business.

### **The Mouth**

Smile. It helps you relax and allows you to appear personable and reasonable, and portrays a lack of fear.

### **Posturing**

Slouching and tipping back your chair is an act best left to schoolchildren. Remember to sit upright as it makes you look attentive. Also, leaning forward slightly portrays the image that you are taking an active interest. Avoid crossing your arms as this creates a defensive image.

## PHONE INTERVIEWS

Phone interviews are increasingly being used for screening interstate or international candidates, and we find that it is being used more and more often as a 'first interview' for candidates heading to the international market. Here are some tips to make the phone interview create some impact with the client.

1. Prepare for the interview in the same way you would for a face to face interview. Rehearse with a friend or family member then rehearse again but this time via the phone. Talking on the phone isn't as easy as it seems. Use a tape recorder to hear your 'ums' and 'uhs' and 'okays' and you can practice reducing them.
2. Make sure you have a quiet place to do the interview and if at home, warn family members and keep animals/children out of the room. Turn off the stereo and the TV. Close the door. Make sure you get the interviewer's name right and then use it as appropriate during the interview.
3. Have a list of things you feel you really need to get across in the interview. If it helps put key words on some cards and place them where you can see them to remind yourself.
4. Dress for the part so you feel professional – this will come across in the interview.
5. Stand and pace if it will help you breath and project your voice as best you can. If there is no room to do so make sure you are seated comfortably but not too laid back.
6. Keep a pen and paper handy for you to take notes in case you have questions.
7. Keep a copy of your resume handy to refer to.
8. Keep your mobile phone off.
9. Don't smoke, chew gum, eat or drink. Do keep a glass of water handy, in case you need to refresh your mouth, but if you do say: 'Please excuse me while a take a sip of water'.
10. Smiling while talking will project a positive image and change the tone of your voice. Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
11. Very important - don't interrupt the interviewer.
12. Don't answer 'yes' or 'no' but keep answers succinct. Take your time – it's perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts.
13. Remember your goal is to get a face-to-face interview.
14. Thank the interviewer for his or her time and say that you hope to meet them in person.
15. Don't be afraid to ask what the next step is from here. What is the timeline for the recruitment campaign?

## THE VIDEO CONFERENCE INTERVIEW

1. Prepare for the interview in the same way you would a face to face interview.
2. Make sure the video conference facility is quiet and there is no noise coming from other rooms. Make sure the door is closed. Make sure you get the interviewer's name right and then use it as appropriate during the interview.
3. Have a list of things you feel you really need to get across in the interview. If it helps put key words on some cards and place them where you can see them to remind yourself.
4. Dress as if you were attending a face to face interview. Make sure not to wear bright colours, patterns or stripes because they can 'strobe' on the other side creating a distraction.
5. Make sure you are seated comfortably but alert as though the interviewers were in the room with you.
6. Remember – first impressions count. As soon as you can see someone on screen and there is a sound connection say eg 'good morning – I'm Bob Smith.' The people on the screen will then introduce themselves to you.
8. Keep a pen and paper handy for you to take notes in case you have questions.
9. Keep a copy of your resume handy to refer to.
10. Keep your mobile phone off.
11. Don't chew gum. Do keep a glass of water handy, in case you need to refresh your mouth, but if you do – say: 'Please excuse me while a take a sip of water'.
12. Smile a lot. Speak slowly and enunciate clearly. There is almost always a 1-2 second time delay between you saying something and the interviewer hearing it, and vice versa. Always take a good pause between sentences to allow for a smoother flow of conversation.
13. Whilst it is very difficult to do during a VC – try to not interrupt the interviewer.
14. Don't answer 'yes' or 'no' but keep answer succinct. Take your time – it's perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to collect your thoughts.
15. Don't be afraid to ask what the next step is from here. What is the timeline for the recruitment campaign?
16. Thank the interviewer for his or her time and say that you hope to meet them in person. Do not get up until the conversation has concluded and all the concluding pleasantries have been dispensed with.





