

MAKING A GREAT IMPRESSION AT INTERVIEW

FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT

- YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION!

Research shows that someone else will make a judgement about you within a few seconds of meeting you for the first time.

The other person forms an opinion about you based on :

- Your appearance
- Your body language
- The way you look and behave
- Your mannerisms
- How you are dressed

These first impressions can be nearly impossible to undo.

So whether it's when you are going for a job interview, college interview or in your social life meeting friends, it is important to create a great first impression.

This guide will be concentrating on making a great impression at interview.

BE ON TIME

Arriving a few minutes early is better than arriving a few seconds late.

Make sure you have researched how to get there and how long it might take, where to park - make allowances for rush hour traffic or if you take a wrong turn.

BE YOURSELF

Being a bit nervous is a good thing - it shows you care about making a great impression and really want the job.

If you are too nervous it may create the wrong impression.

If you are calm and confident (or at least look as though your are) , the other person will feel more at ease and you will be in good position to make that great first impression.

For help in controlling nerves, read the section : Breathing Exercise to Reduce Stress at the end of this document.

LOOK GOOD

"A picture paints a thousand words"

The "picture" you present says much about you to the person you are meeting.

DRESS APPROPRIATELY

A suit is probably a good idea for an Office job.
Smart casual clothes - shirt and trousers, for most other jobs

Think about what the person you are meeting might be wearing.

LOOK CLEAN AND TIDY

A clean and tidy appearance is appropriate for most job and social occasions.

A good haircut or shave, clean and tidy clothes, neat and tidy make-up will all help you to feel "the part".

If you feel good about your appearance you will feel more calm and confident.

THE INITIAL GREETING

Now that you have arrived on time and look the part, you are ready to create that great first impression.

The first person you meet may be the Receptionist - remember that impressing them is important as well as the person interviewing you - it is likely that the Receptionist will be asked " What did you think of him/her ?" At Reception, explain why you are there and who your interview is with.

"Smile and the world smiles too !"

There's nothing like a nice smile to create a good first impression.

A warm and confident smile will put both you and the other person at ease.

Your body language as well as your appearance speaks much louder than words.

Use your body language to project your confidence and positive attitude :

- Stand tall
- Smile
- Make eye contact
- Greet with firm handshake

Be aware of any nervous habits you might have - e.g. sweaty palms, a nervous laugh etc. - being aware of them can help you keep them in check.

Good manners and polite, attentive and courteous behaviour all help to make a great first impression. So, be on your best behaviour! If the person is in an Office, knock on the door and wait to be invited in.

“Turn off your mobile phone.”

The person meeting you for the first time deserves 100% of your attention.

You have just a few seconds to make a great first impression and it is almost impossible ever to change it. So give it your best shot. Most of what you need to do to make a great impression is common sense - but with a little extra thought and preparation, you can do everything possible to make every first impression not just good, but great.

Make sure you have everything you need with you - invitation letter, directions, a copy of your CV, your record of achievement, samples of coursework if appropriate.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD INTERVIEW?

PREPARATION

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- Prepare what you are going to say in response to predictable questions
- Research the organisation so that you can talk knowledgeably about them
- Study the job advert and any other information to help know what type of person they are looking for
For example - if going for a Mechanical Engineering Apprenticeship, the employer may be looking for qualities such as :
 - able to understand technical drawings and information
 - have practical skills and be able to use different types of tools

- be able to work out solutions to engineering problems
- work well as part of a team
- have good IT skills
- be able to communicate clearly
- be able to plan work to keep to timetables and deadlines
- interested in engineering and technology

So be prepared to tell specific stories that show that you are able to demonstrate these qualities and your strengths.

- Prepare some questions to ask the interviewer
- Practice what you are going to say

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED

What are your strengths?

Rehearse talking about your strengths adding any achievements.

What are your weaknesses?

Have one or two ready to talk about - don't say that you don't have any !!
Explain that you are aware of them and how you overcome them.

Why did you apply for this job?

Emphasise your skills and how you could use them in the job and how much you think you would enjoy the job / company. Better to go for a job that you would find interesting or enjoy.

What has been your best achievement?

Have a couple of really good examples ready.

What problems have you overcome?

Be prepared to talk about problem solving with any problems you have faced and how you overcame them - these can be problems with difficult people or more technical problems.

What do you do in your spare time?

Be prepared to talk enthusiastically about the things you like doing.

You may be asked about your experience of being part of a team - be prepared to talk about the teams, their achievements and the role you personally played in the success of the teams.

You may be asked about your communication skills - the importance of good communication - remember to include listening as an important part of communications,

If the job is a skilled one, the interviewer may ask you to give examples of when you have used the skills required - prepare stories showing your use of these skills.

This list is not exhaustive - an interviewer may ask you anything - so

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QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY WANT TO ASK

You may well be partially judged on the quality of the questions that you ask the interviewer.

Don't ask more than a couple of questions.

It is sometimes worth asking?

How do they see the role developing?

What opportunities for training are available?

What opportunities are there to progress within the Company?

Avoid asking " how much will I get or how much holiday I'm going to get " - this information will be available when you have to decide whether or not to take the job!

IN SUMMARY

Your performance at interview is going to be affected by three main things:

- How well you answer their questions
- How effectively you get over what **you** want to say
- How you come over - how great an impression you make

Before the Interview:

- Concentrate on making that great first impression
- Find out as much as you can about the role
- Know your skills, evidence stories and prepare answers to predictable questions
- Prepare a couple of questions to ask them
- Practice giving a positive impression
- Remember the importance of non-verbal communication.

At the Interview:

- Constantly monitor your non-verbal communication - make sure you are looking calm and confident, enthusiastic, make good use of smiling and adopt an open sitting posture.
- Give a positive spin on all your answers - avoid saying any negative things
- Take the opportunity to use your stories to demonstrate your strengths

After the Interview:

- Ask for constructive feedback on the strengths and any areas for improvement

PREPARATION, PREPARATION, PREPARATION

...is the key to Making a Great Impression at Interview

BREATHING EXERCISE TO REDUCE STRESS

Breathing is something most of us take for granted. However, most of us do not realize that when we are under stress we tend to hold our breath or take short, shallow breaths. Because oxygen is the most important nutrient for the heart, brain and every other major organ of the body, limiting our intake can have far reaching effects on the body. Therefore, breathing exercises can be very helpful for reducing stress, relaxing and rejuvenating the body as well as the mind.

This exercise can be done whilst sitting or standing:

1. Take a deep breath in through your nose as you drop your chin toward your chest.
2. Hold the breath for a few seconds.
3. Release the breath and blow away the stress through your mouth.
4. Repeat as necessary.