

## How to Make a Good First Impression at Interview

'You only get one chance to make a first impression', and this is a saying you would be wise to remember, particularly if you are about to enter an interview situation.

The fact that you have been called to interview suggests that so far, the potential employer is impressed with your CV or application form and they believe that you could be the right person for the job. It is vital therefore that when you meet them in person, their high opinion of you is confirmed, and this confirmation is often achieved in the first 30 seconds of your interview. They may even decide whether you've got the job within this first 30 seconds!

### **So, how *do* you make a good first impression?**

When your interviewer sees you for the first time they want to see that you have made an effort for your interview. Dressing to impress will demonstrate that you are passionate about the position and that the job and the company matter to you. Dressing to impress means presenting yourself smartly and appropriately. This will more than likely mean that you should wear a suit, ensuring your clothes are clean and ironed and your shoes are clean and appropriate, i.e. no trainers! There are certain jobs where a suit may not be appropriate and a more relaxed style can be adopted but these occasions are fairly rare and therefore, if in doubt, you should err on the side of caution and wear a suit.

The way you enter the room is also vital; you should enter with confidence, with your shoulders back and your head held high, and of course you should always present a friendly face and a firm handshake upon introduction. Speak clearly and confidently, even if you are feeling nervous inside, a smile and a clear greeting will easily hide your nerves.

Finally, when you sit down for your interview, sit up straight, although not too stiff as you should still appear relaxed. Do not cross your arms or demonstrate any other signs of closed body language, such as covering your mouth with your hand as you talk or turning your body away from the interviewer.

As your interview progresses, you will probably begin to relax, but always remember to try and maintain the confident, open demeanour that you started the interview with, as this is the one that should win them over in the first 30 seconds.... the rest of your interview should simply reaffirm that their initial good impression of you, was the right one.

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