

How to Ace a Job interview in 7 Seconds

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You are at a job interview and the interviewer looks up as you enter the room. Now, count slowly to seven. In that amount of time, you will have been evaluated - and decisions will have been made about your credibility, trustworthiness, confidence and competence.

According to research at New York University, you've got just seven seconds to make a lasting first impression. While you can't stop people from making snap decisions - the human brain is hardwired in this way - you *can* understand how to make those decisions work in your favor. Obviously, you won't impress anyone by what you say in seven short seconds. In fact, it's all about what you *don't* say. Your body language.

A poor first impression is hard to overcome, no matter how solid your credentials. Here are seven powerful ways to make a positive first impression at your next job interview:

1. **Adjust your attitude.** People pick up your attitude instantly. Before you enter an office for that job interview think about the situation and make a conscious choice about the attitude you want to embody. Attitudes that attract people include friendly, happy, receptive, patient, approachable, welcoming, helpful and curious. Attitudes that are off-putting include angry, impatient, bored, arrogant, afraid, disheartened, and suspicious.

2. **Stand tall.** Your body language is a reflection of your emotions, but it also influences your emotions. The next time you go into a job interview, you can start projecting confidence and credibility by standing up straight, pulling your shoulders back and holding your head high. Just by assuming this physical position, you will begin to feel surer of yourself.

3. **Smile.** A smile is an invitation, a sign of welcome. It says, "I'm friendly and approachable." Smiling directly influences how other people respond to you. The human brain prefers happy faces, recognizing them more quickly than those with negative expressions. In fact, research shows that if you smile at someone, it activates the "reward center" in that person's brain. It is also a natural response for the other person to smile back at you.

4. **Make eye contact.** Looking at someone's eyes transmits energy and indicates interest and openness. A simple way to improve your eye contact in that first seven seconds is to look into the interviewer's eyes long enough to notice what color they are. With this one simple technique, you will dramatically increase your likeability factor.

5. **Raise your eyebrows.** Open your eyes slightly more than normal to simulate the "eyebrow flash" that is the universal signal of recognition and acknowledgement.

6. **Lean in slightly.** Leaning forward shows you're engaged and interested. We naturally lean toward people and things we like or agree with. But be respectful of the other person's space. That means, in most interview situations, staying about two feet away.

7. **Shake hands.** This is the quickest way to establish rapport. It's also the most effective. Research shows it takes an average of three hours of continuous interaction to develop the same level of rapport that you can get with a single handshake. Just make

sure you keep your body squared off to the other person – facing him or her fully, that you have a firm (but not bone-crushing) grip with palm-to-palm and web-to- web contact. And hold the other person's hand a few fractions of a second longer than you are naturally inclined to do. This conveys additional sincerity and quite literally "holds" the other person's attention while you exchange greetings.

Every interview is an opportunity to increase your skill at making a positive first impression. You've got just seven seconds – but if you handle it well, seven seconds are all you need!

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