

## **How to create the right first impression at an interview**

Because of the current economic climate, it is really tough out there and competition for jobs is fierce. Here are some ways, you can prepare yourself and create the right first impression at your interview

### **Be positive**

- Give yourself “a check up, from the neck up”.  
Get yourself in a positive frame of mind prior to the interview. Tell yourself you are the best person for the job and believe it. Talk to yourself on the way to the interview and reinforce your positive thoughts. You’ll probably get some strange looks but at least, you’ll arrive in the right frame of mind.
- If you’re prone to nerves, try and take some time to breathe deeply and compose yourself. Keep a hanky or tissue in your pocket, in case you get sweaty palms. Remember, the people interviewing you are only human.
- It will help you to feel confident and positive if you are well prepared for the interview to begin with.
- Be confident, but not too confident. There is a thin line between being confident and being cocky. Make sure you don’t cross it.

### **Be on time**

- In fact aim to get there early.
- Plan your journey in advance.
- Make sure you print off a copy of the directions and make a note of the telephone number and person you’re meeting.
- Give yourself enough time for the journey and make sure you know exactly where you’re going. If you don’t know how long the journey will take, and you’ve got time, drive over to the offices prior to the interview. If you can’t do that make sure you check AA route planner or similar.
- If you’re travelling into the city by car, make sure you think about where you’re going to park and don’t forget to have enough change if you need to park on a meter.

### **Lose the Luggage**

Ask if you can leave your coat and any hand luggage at reception, as you don't want to be wrestling with bags as you walk into an interview room.

### **Smile**

- Smile and the word smiles with you. This always creates a good impression. If you smile, chances are you’ll get a smile back and then you’re off to a pleasant start.

### **Eye contact**

- When you are greeted by your interviewer, be sure to make eye contact. This shows you are confident.
- You should maintain eye contact throughout the interview. Obviously, don’t stare at the interviewer without taking your eyes off them for a second; this might have them calling for security, but ensure eye contact at appropriate times.
- If you are being interviewed by more than one person, deliver your responses equally; don't ignore anyone.

### **Handshake**

- When your interviewer offers you their hand, be prepared to take their whole hand and shake it firmly. Again this will convey confidence.

## **Look the part**

- It is always appropriate to wear a suit to an interview, even if it's a trendy media company were they "dress down". Remember, you don't work there yet, so you need to dress to impress.
- You also need to be clean and fresh (you'd be surprised). This means a clean shave, at least for the men and fresh, clean clothes
- Avoid wearing strong smelling aftershave or perfume and not too much make up or jewellery.
- If you're a smoker don't be tempted to have one last drag before the interview. The smell of stale smoke is not pleasant, especially for a non smoker.

## **Be interested**

- This means listening and letting the interviewer know you're listening by nodding your head in agreement occasionally.
- Don't forget this is also your chance to find out about the company. Try and ask some relevant questions to show you are interested and you understand.

## **Remain Composed throughout**

- Don't feel you need to rush. Take some time to consider your answers.
- Speak clearly and not too quickly
- Try to answer the question concisely and stick to the point, don't waffle
- If you're not sure of an answer, be honest and say so rather than trying to blag it.

## **Body language**

Some research suggests that when we communicate a message, at least half of what we communicate, comes from our body language.

- During an interview try and keep an open posture. This means arms not folded but on your lap.
- Sit upright and face the interviewer.
- Try not to slouch or wriggle about in your seat too much.
- If the seat is in an awkward position, ask to move it so that you are comfortable.

**This information was produced for Berkeley Square IT in association with IT People CV's. For more information visit**

