

Interview Skills

Body Language

As soon as you walk through the door of the interview room, the interviewer has a first impression of you. So how do you create the right impression from the start?

Firm handshake

- Ensure that it is neither the 'wet fish' nor the 'knuckle-crusher'.
- A good handshake should be vertically palm to palm, with a firm grip, while maintaining eye contact.

Keep your body language open and relaxed.

- Closed hand movements and crossed arms give the impression of being defensive.
- By sitting comfortably with your back against the chair you will appear confident.

Good eye contact is essential during an interview

- Although staring at somebody intensely over a long time can be very off-putting.
- If you find eye contact difficult, try talking to the interviewer's left or right ear.

Body Language

Having the best CV and all the right answers to testing interview questions won't get you anywhere if your body language gives an entirely different message.

- Research has shown that tone of voice and body language accounts for 65% of what's communicated, words 35%.
- Body language can give away our feelings, even when you are not

Obvious body language signs include:

- Fidgeting shows boredom and restlessness
- Crossing arms indicates an unwillingness to listen
- Tapping feet is distracting and a sign of boredom
- Doodling on paper shows you're not paying attention
- Touching your face or playing with your hair can be a sign that you are hiding something
- Looking away or hesitating before you answer indicates that you are unsure of something
- A fixed, unfocused stare shows your attention is elsewhere
- Some people are more responsive to body language than others, but as a candidate
- Striving to make a good impression, it is important to be aware at all times of the body language that may give out a negative impression.

Positive body language

- Responsive/eager – Leaning forward, open arms, nodding
- Listening – Head tilted, constant eye contact, nodding
- Attentive – smiling

Negative body language

- Bored – slumped posture, foot tapping
- Rejection – arms folded, head down
- Aggression Leaning too far forward, finger pointing
- Lying – Touching face, hands over mouth, eyes averted, shifting position, glancing

Voice

It is important to project yourself confidently in a clear, controlled and steady voice that can be easily understood.

Practice and try to be aware of the following:

- Use a range of tones, avoid monotone
- Pause before speaking
- Speak slightly slower than normal
- Don't mumble or babble excitedly
- Keep your hands away from your mouth as you speak
- Watch your pitch and dynamics (high-pitched voices are tough on the ears)
- Let your voice show your enthusiasm and keenness

Who do you address?

- Always look at the person questioning you
- Direct your answer to the questioner
- Glance around to engage the whole panel

It is of vital importance to listen to and understand what the interviewer is asking or saying to you. Too often, interviewees are in such a hurry to speak, usually out of nervousness, sometimes out of overconfidence, that they do not fully hear what has been said.

There is also the danger that you hear what you want to hear rather than what is actually being said.

- Avoid preconceptions; give the other person your full attention.
- Wait for them to finish what they are saying, be open-minded, not prejudiced.
- If you're not sure what the interviewer means, ask for clarification; it doesn't mean you are stupid! In fact just the opposite.

You want to present yourself in the best possible light throughout the interview process.

This will involve effective answering of the questions asked, but also grasping any other opportunities to make your case.

- Keep to the point
- Be clear
- Know the appropriate jargon
- Speak with confidence
- Keep your answers positive
- Be honest and open with replies
- Give plenty of work related examples
- Be enthusiastic

At the end of the interview take your leave as smoothly and politely as possible.

- Do not add any afterthoughts
- Thank the Interviewer or panel for their time through the Chair.
- Don't let the success of your future depend on trying to find out how you interview on the day.
- Take time to practice.

