

You only have one chance to make a first impression—leave a positive and lasting one on your interviewer by impressing with your appearance and behavior, establishing rapport, displaying your knowledge when answering questions, and following up after the interview.

While there is no science behind winning an interview, we do have a few suggestions for making the most of the opportunity and increasing your chances of success. First, prepare for the interview. Then conduct yourself in a way that establishes rapport with your interviewers. Finally, demonstrate your skills, display your confidence, and show your knowledge through your delivery, answering questions competently and precisely.

1. Impressing with Appearance and Mannerisms

Nonverbals—dress, attitude, tone of voice, mannerisms, habits, eye contact— create a strong impression and tell your interviewer a lot about who you are. Are you confident? Focused? Respectful? Professional? An interviewer uses this impression to judge such features as reliability, confidence, and ability to adjust to new situations. Your attitude and the visual impressions you give your interviewer are as important as the things you say in your interview.

Dress to Impress

Present yourself well by being polished in your attire. Dress appropriately for the environment in which you are interviewing; err on the conservative side. Ask your recruiter for attire suggestions before your interview.

Arrive on Time and Greet with a Firm Handshake

Be on time. Be a little early even. The quickest way to create a bad impression is to keep your interviewer waiting. At the beginning and end of your interview, give a firm and confident handshake while looking your interviewer in the eye. This shows respect and confidence.

Watch your Body Language

If you know you're naturally fidgety or use your hands too much while talking, practice resisting those habits, either with a friend or in front of a mirror. Sit up straight, but don't sit rigidly. Rest your hands on the table where they can be seen. Avoid making many adjustments to your hair or wardrobe.

Make Eye Contact

It is very important to make eye contact throughout the interview. It demonstrates not only your confidence, but also shows respect for your interviewer. Eye contact with your interviewer can also give you cues in regards to how he is responding to your answers. If you are interviewing with multiple people, divide your attention evenly and be sure to make eye contact with you all your interviewers.

Smile

Never underestimate the power of your smile. Smiling will help you interview better. It casts you as a positive and enthusiastic person, sets your interviewer at ease and gives you confidence.

2. Establishing Rapport and Demonstrating Knowledge

Your goal in an interview is to establish good rapport with the interviewers, generate a positive feeling, and leave them feeling confident in your abilities. You want to leave a lasting, positive impression, so that you're their first choice for the job. Answer questions in a way that shows you are knowledgeable, without seeming cocky or overconfident.

Show Enthusiasm

Be energetic about the job, the company, your interviewer, and the possibility of working in the position for which you're interviewing. Enthusiasm is contagious, and if the interviewer genuinely enjoys the time they spend interviewing you, you're likely to get the job. Without enthusiasm, you risk coming across as dull or not interested in the company or position. Your state of mind will directly affect the success of your interview. Don't be over the top, but show genuine enthusiasm throughout the interview.

Interview your Interviewer

Remember to truly consider the position, company culture, and person interviewing you. Be attentive to the job description the interviewer offers, and ask questions. You don't want to realize after you've been hired that the job is a bad fit! Ask your interviewer who the company is ideally looking for, how he feels about the company culture, and what an average day in the role would be. You can also ask the interviewer how she feels this interview went or what she saw on your resume that might make you a good fit for the role. Show your interest in your interviewer, by asking him how his day is going, and relating on common interests. An attitude of genuine interest in the discussion can help set the tone for a good interview.

Focus on the Questions Asked

Take a few seconds after a question is asked to make sure you understand it. You may want to repeat the question back to show that you understood, or clarify what is being asked. Then directly answer the question the interviewer is asking specifically and concisely. Avoid volunteering facts which are irrelevant and do not go off on tangents. Practice this with your IT recruiter, especially if you know you have a tendency to talk too much. The success of your interview depends on your ability to answer an interviewer's questions effectively, and focus is the key to being able to do so. After you feel you have answered the question, there's no harm in checking with your interviewer, 'is that what you were looking for or would you like me to explain this further?'

Stay Positive

Interviewers respond positively to self-confidence, positive attitudes, and politeness. They do not like listening to complaints, and look down on negative statements made about past employers, managers, or companies. Speak positively about former experiences, and put a positive spin even on questions like, 'talk about a time when you dealt with a difficult co-worker.' Don't put the other person down, but share how you reacted in a way that gives a positive impression to your interviewer.

Be Honest

Act with integrity and be honest about experience you lack or a situation of confrontation. Demonstrate your eagerness to learn the required skill. Define your ability to resolve or prevent a conflict. Do not lie in your interview—if you're caught, the interviewer will logically assume you will continue to lie on the job. Always tell the truth.

Speak Knowledgeably and Confidently

Create a good impression by speaking about your proven capabilities and your ability to acquire new skills. If you have prior related experience, offer your interviewer an example of when you used the skill or technology she is asking about. If you know you lack experience in a technology, research that technology before the interview. Don't pretend you have experience with the technology, but share what you know and your confidence that your experience with similar technologies will carry over to this one. If you don't have that experience, think of a parallel you can draw. Explain things clearly and your interviewer will know you are capable of what will be asked of you.

Talk About Your Accomplishments

When speaking about past projects or jobs, talk about what you accomplished. It's ok to acknowledge team efforts, but be sure you're speaking with "I" language. While your interviewer may be looking for a team player, ultimately he wants to know what *you* can do, what *you* know, and how *you* will accomplish what is asked of you on the job.

3. Finishing with Finesse

To ensure you leave a lasting impression, finish the interview politely and express your interest in moving forward with the process. Go above and beyond when following up after an interview.

Ask about Next Steps

After your interview, briefly summarize how you fit the role for which you are interviewing. Then ask when they will make a decision on who they plan to hire. You may also want to ask if they have other candidates they are interviewing. Clarify a time you should check in with them.

Say Thank You and Follow Up with a Note

It may seem obvious, but remember to say thank you in person as the interview ends. You can tell your interviewer how much you enjoyed meeting with him and appreciated his making time for you. Be sure to follow up with a thank you note for every interviewer, again expressing your appreciation for the time they spent with you, highlighting one or two reasons you are a good fit for the position, and expressing enthusiasm at the possibility of working for the company. Use your discretion if the decision timeline allows for a handwritten note sent through standard mail, or if an emailed note would be more appropriate. However you approach it, make sure you say *thanks*.

Speak with your Recruiter

We'd like to know how the interview went. If there was a skill you forgot to highlight or a question you weren't expecting and might not have answered to the best of your ability, we may be able to assist your interview success by discussing it with our client. If you feel good about how the interview went—we'd like to hear that too!

Interviewing can be a blow to the ego because it can result in rejection—if you receive an offer in one interview out of ten, you are doing well. Nervousness and lack of confidence are often caused by fear of losing. But there's nothing to lose—you didn't have an offer before the interview, so you're no worse off if you are without one after the interview. It is fear that weakens your confidence, but there should be no such fear in an interview. It is centered on what you know best: yourself.

Having a successful interview is a result of being well prepared, creating a good impression, answering questions clearly and with confidence, and closing on a positive note. Keep your head high and remember that there is a job waiting for you out there.