

How to Impress

Your CV or application form has already impressed the employer. The next step is to sell yourself in person.

Making a good impression

It is not just what you say but how you say it that reinforces the message you are giving and creates an overall impression of your suitability. Here are some tips for making a good initial impression:

- Make sure you arrive on time. If something unexpected occurs that is beyond your control, contact your prospective employer as soon as possible to explain that you may be delayed.
- Arriving a few minutes early will give you time to collect your thoughts. If you arrive too early, it is better to go for a coffee and relax rather than presenting yourself long before the interview time.
- If you speak first to a receptionist, state who you are, the time of your appointment and the name of the person you expect to meet, clearly and with a friendly smile.
- Make sure you know exactly where to find all the documents you may need so that you can produce them from your bag without delay or confusion.

As the interview progresses, you will continue to make a positive impression if you:

- listen carefully to the current question, and try to give concise answers supported with relevant examples;
- avoid answering simply 'yes' or 'no';
- are not afraid to ask for clarification if a question is not clear;

- speak clearly and loudly enough for the interviewer(s) to hear, and try not to speak too fast. This can be difficult when you are nervous, but take a deep breath before you start to answer a question and work on keeping your answers concise.

Body language

Be aware of what your body language is saying and how to use it to strengthen your chances.

- Shake hands with the interviewer(s) at the beginning and end of the interview.
- Good posture and a friendly expression will indicate that you have a positive approach.
- Relax into your chair, but without slouching.
- Maintain good eye contact. If you have more than one person interviewing you, look at the person asking the question when you reply but glance at the other interviewers from time to time.
- Try to smile from time to time where appropriate.