

A Blusource Guide to Body Language in Interviews




Make sure
you make
a **great**
impression!

Introduction

The expression of “it’s not what you say, it’s what you do” is never more true than during an interview. Your body language can have a significant impact on how you are perceived by the person interviewing you and this can start from before you walk in the door. Don’t forget you are being judged before you have even spoken.

Here are some top tips, some of which will seem blindingly obvious, to help with how to give the best impression in an interview.

A white silhouette of a person wearing a suit and tie, positioned against a blue background. A white speech bubble originates from the person's head, containing the text "It's not what you say, it's what you do".

“It’s not what you say, it’s what you do”

The Entrance

Remember the interview starts even before you get to the interview room. You don’t know who could be in the parking lot with you, looking at you from a window or standing next to you in the lift. Your body should tell anyone who might be watching that you’re confident and calm. It’s not the time to be frantically searching through your portfolio for printouts of your CV.

Shaking Hands

Job interviews mean handshakes -- so what are the secrets to the perfect handshake? The overly aggressive shake, or “death grip,” can be as off-putting as the limp handshake, so practice with a friend before the interview to find the right balance.

You’re going to be shaking with your right hand, so prepare by arranging your belongings on your left side. Offer your hand with the palm slightly up so that your interviewer’s hand covers yours. It’s a sign that you’re giving them status, and never cover the other person’s hand with the hand you’re not shaking with as it can be interpreted as a sign of domination.

Smile

A smile is an invitation, a sign of welcome. It says, “I’m friendly, approachable, and sure of myself.” Obviously keep the smile natural and nod appropriately to show you are listening and understand the topic of discussion, to sit through an interview grinning inanely would most certainly give the wrong impression.

Eye contact

This is the best way to show you’re actually paying attention and engaging with the situation. Of course this doesn’t mean stare blankly at your interviewer, but strive to hold eye contact for a few seconds at a time.

If you’re faced with more than one interviewer, be sure to make eye contact with all of them. Address the person who asked the question, then hold eye contact with the other interviewer for a few seconds, before returning your attention to the first interviewer.

A white silhouette of a person wearing a suit, tie, and glasses, positioned against a red background. A white speech bubble originates from the person's head, containing the text "Show you're actually paying attention and engaging with the situation with eye contact."

Show you’re actually **paying attention and engaging** with the situation with **eye contact**.

Posture

From the moment you arrive in the reception area, you need to keep your posture perfect. Always be aware of your body position and avoid angling yourself towards the door, it'll look like you're planning a quick escape! Sit up straight and lean forwards a little when you're asked question, it gives a sense of curiosity and engagement.

Sitting hunched forward, or lounging with arms and legs everywhere has the effect of looking a little too relaxed. You don't want to sit there tightly clutching your fists in your lap, but you also don't want to portray a casual, not really bothered attitude.

Mirroring

You can quickly get on good terms with your interviewer by matching their positive body language.

Do so sparingly and carefully as if you're too bold you're more likely to frighten the poor interviewer! Mirroring a nod or a subtle shift in posture or a hand gesture can create common ground between two people.

Most importantly, be respectful and keep a professional personal distance at all times. Your aim is to always keep the focus on the conversation, so keep your expression interested, your posture confident and your head high from the moment you arrive in the lobby until the second you're a safe distance away.

Fidgeting!

This is something to avoid! People who play with their hair or excessively touch or rub their noses can seem dishonest and untrustworthy. Also try to avoid rubbing your head or neck, it can give the impression of being bored or disinterested. Same goes for sitting with your arms crossed, it just makes you look defensive and unapproachable. This includes tapping your fingertips in the arm rest or jiggling your leg up or down. It's a sign of boredom and impatience. Keep both feet planted firmly on the floor to avoid the temptation. It'll help to keep your posture straight and focussed on your interviewer, which in turn will make you seem more focused.

All your personal gestures should be open and expressive. Keep your shoulders relaxed and facing the interviewer to ensure they're always involved in what you're saying.

The Art of Departing

At the end of the interview, gather your belongings calmly, rise smoothly, smile and nod your head. If shaking hands with everyone in the room isn't convenient, at least shake hands with the hiring manager and the person who brought you to the interview space.

You may be tempted to try to read your interviewers' body language for signals about how the interview went, but don't, because they're likely trained not to give away too much. Also try not to allow any negative thoughts into your mind as that may cause you to leave the interview in a negative way.

Finally....

Hopefully the above tips will help you to think about how you may be perceived in an interview situation. The key thing above all is to be yourself! And of course, if there is anything you wish to discuss in more detail, the Blusource consultants, are here to help!

