

How to Make a Great Impression

First of all, remember that they are interested in you. If you were not qualified for the position (at least on paper), they would not have called you for an interview. From what they have seen so far, you fit the company's needs. Accept that, and then go on to show the interviewer that you possess all the qualities that make up their definition of a fabulous employee.

You're on time, well groomed, knowledgeable of the position and the company—but you have to do one more thing. Setting the tone of the interview is, to an important extent, all up to you.

Keep it in mind that many interviewers do not like this process any better than you do. Managers who are not used to conducting interviews may feel nervous or uncomfortable. But, whether they are an "old pro" or a novice at interviewing is less important than how you conduct yourself.

Take the initiative. From the moment you are called into the room, be as confident as you possibly can be. Be the first one to make eye contact, smile, extend your hand, and introduce yourself. Speak clearly, neither too loudly nor too softly.

Be outgoing and enthusiastic. This isn't always easy because interviews can make people nervous, and nervous people tend to smile less, and act more stiff and formal than they normally would. However, as an event planner, you will be working with many people. The employer wants to see that you are comfortable even in a potentially uncomfortable interpersonal situation such as an interview. If you tend to be stiff and uncomfortable during an interview, it is time to **perform**. Act how you would if you did not feel nervous. This may feel unnatural at first, but behaving as if you are not nervous can actually make you start to feel that way as well.

Be inquisitive. If you have done your research on the position, the company and the industry, you will be eager to ask questions. Don't derail the tempo of the interview, but if the moment seems appropriate, be sure to jump in with a question. To the interviewer, this will show that you care enough to have done some thinking about the position and that you would be an asset to the team.

Talk about the **job at hand**. All too often, our experts tell us that prospective employees spend too much time asking about promotions and management positions when they should be discussing the job they're under consideration for. Focus on what value you would bring to the company as an employee, and not on what you want to get from the job. For example, don't discuss how much vacation time you want or bring up salary until the employer does.

Be assertive but not aggressive. The company probably has more than its share of "yes people" and people who just coast along. If the opportunity avails itself, don't hesitate to express your opinion on a work-related issue or concern. Taking the initiative to broach a subject with confidence will show your leadership potential and will underscore your confidence and ease with others.

Be positive. Avoid saying anything negative, especially about former employers. Also avoid saying anything negative about yourself, which some applicants do by sounding as if they are desperate for a job. Before the interview, remind yourself how much you have to offer an employer, and that there are **many opportunities** for you. Believe that if this particular job doesn't work out, there is something better out there for you.

Exude confidence, poise, leadership, and capability. Chances are, you'll get that second interview—and your dream job!



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