

Making a First Impression

First impressions are not only lasting, they are determined in a flash – less than five seconds. They speak louder than your voice and are stronger than your academic credentials. Employers draw up to 25 conclusions before you even sit down for an interview. “Your earning potential is directly related to your image, and the level of influence you can achieve is linked to a credible presence.”¹

First, understand the company’s expectations. Sit in the parking lot and watch who comes out. What are the employees wearing? Model your attire to fit the culture.

Additional tips for striking a first impression that wins a second interview include:

1. Don’t forget form. **Avoid rolling shoulders or slouching in chairs**
2. Greet potential employers with an appropriate handshake. **Men should have two handshakes: one for men and one for woman.**
3. High-energy attitudes say a lot about how a person will interact in the workplace. **“You have to look like you want the job and have energy that you are rested and have vitality – not that you are tired.”²**
4. Speak directly and ask questions that prompt conversation. **For example, “When should I expect to hear about the status of the position?” rather than, “Will you call me when you make a decision?”**
5. Details make a difference. Iron clothing, get a fresh haircut, polish your shoes and clip your nails. These little things show employers you are a stickler for detail and a polished worker. Absolutely no chewing gum.

All this sounds like common sense – no problem. **“Never use the words “no problem” you’re leaving the listener with two negative words”.**³

Sandy Heath, is a Certified Temporary Staffing Specialist, with over 20 years in the employment industry. Her firm, Sandra Heath & Associates (SHA) specializes in the placement of office support personnel both on a permanent and temporary basis. Sandy has won numerous awards and accolades including Top 10 Women Business Owners in Northeast Ohio and has been invited to participate in various forums dealing with employment, diversity and certification issues.

¹ Danielle Turcola, Pres. Professionalism International

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