

# First Impressions – 30 Seconds in an Interview

[First impressions](#) are formed in less than 30 seconds.

*Psychology Today* says we process small clues, everything from tone of voice to posture, and in a snap we form a larger picture in our minds. This means that hiring managers may draw conclusions, and finalize their opinions, in under a minute.

One study found that people shown 20 second video segments of job applicants formed similar opinions to [hiring managers](#) who were given 20 full minutes with the applicants.

Now that's a snap decision.

## Beyond The Boardroom

The importance of first impressions goes beyond your hiring manager. When you get the job, you'll need to impress your co-workers, vendors, clients, and so on.

Honestly, it's just as important in the non-work world. How long does it take you to make a yae or nay decision when you're introduced to a potential date?

The bottom line is that you need to keep your first impression top of mind and walk into each situation prepared for your review.

## The Eyes Have It

Good posture and strong eye contact are key physical attributes to think about. Dressing appropriately is always high on the list impression triggers. And good personal hygiene? We don't need to mention that, right? Bed Head may be a great line of beauty products, but actual unwashed hair won't cut it.

On the flip side of that, too much personal hygiene can be a bad thing. I once interviewed a job candidate whose perfume was so strong I had to keep leaving the room to get fresh air.

## Relax

Take a deep breath. We've all seen people who come off as stiff or even arrogant in an attempt to make a good impression. Take a breath and try to relax. The more relaxed you are, the more naturally confident you'll appear.

## Be Attentive

Ask questions and listen to the answers. Making other people feel like the center of attention is a great way to become desirable yourself. People love to talk about themselves, help them out by asking questions and listening to them attentively.

## Watch Your Language

We're judged not only by what we say, but also by how we say it. In the business world our language is viewed as a sign of intelligence, education, and culture. This doesn't mean that being overly formal or sounding like a walking dictionary is a good thing. It's not. But neither is sounding like you didn't finish elementary school.

## Shake On It

You hear this all the time: you've got to have a [good handshake](#). Yet people still struggle with this simple act. Get it right! All the good work you've done can be undone in an instant if you offer a limp, clammy, or fingers only handshake. Make your handshake firm and solid. Period.

There's an old saying you only get one chance to make a first impression. Now we know that the one chance comes and goes in an instant.

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