

## *7 steps to a 7 second impression*

*This means you need to act quickly in order to make a first impression. To be remembered well, here are seven things to do in those crucial seven seconds.*

- 1. Look smart. Appearance is as important as body language and your answers in a discussion interview, so you need your appearance to be fitting for the occasion. It is good practice to dress smartly for your meeting; you'd much rather be overdressed than seen as messy., Remove any extreme piercings and cover any visible tattoos with long sleeves or buttoned up blouses. You'll be judged on your appearance in the seven seconds, so make sure there is nothing that could hinder a positive first impression.*
- 2. Smile. Facial expression is important when it comes to making a good impression. You need to make sure your expression is saying more about you than words could in a split second. Make sure you don't have a grimace on your face. Go for I would love to chat with you. Come across as warm and outgoing. They need to spend all seven seconds thinking you are confident and professional- which is achieved with a smile.*
- 3. Shake hands. The handshake is a sign of professionalism, politeness and confidence. A good handshake is a fine art; a tricky balance between a tight squeeze and a limp stroke. It needs to say "I mean business" and also "I'm cooperative," so you might want to perfect it beforehand. Additionally, make sure you everyone's hands if there are multiple attendees. You don't want to slight someone because you only acknowledged the person in the middle, or the "main" host. Greet everyone separately and you will have successfully presented yourself well, creating a good impression.*
- 4. Introduce yourself. The chances are someone probably has information on you, so they know who you are. But even so, when you shake their hands just say "Hi I'm John;" they will then introduce themselves and you can reply "Glad to meet you" or something similar. It breaks the tension and gives the first few seconds a conversation topic. It also means you are less likely to ramble or clam up. Every one of the seven seconds needs to be productive so don't waste any on random topics- you are there to talk about your topic, so do so right from the beginning.*
- 5. Speak clearly. There is little point introducing yourself and not being heard because you cannot be understood. Speak in a competent and confident way making sure what you say is relevant and appropriate; you want to put yourself in a good light and give as much, good information as possible. Make sure you don't speak too loudly and speak at an appropriate pitch.*
- 6. Maintain eye contact. People will think you are nervous or rude when you don't make eye contact. Therefore, to make a good first impression make sure you lock eyes with your host as soon as you enter the room and maintain it whilst you shake hands*

*and introduce yourself. Don't stare, but hold the interviewer's gaze for at least three seconds at a time throughout the rest of the interview too.*

*7. Sit down only when invited to do so. After you have shaken hands and introduced yourself do not sit down. It is polite to wait until invited to sit. Your host may say "please sit down" or "take a seat," but if you just walk straight in and seat yourself it will appear rude. The best plan of action for that positive first impression is to do the meet and greet then sit down when you are invited to.*

*Seven seconds goes by quickly, in seven seconds. Smile, shake hands, speak clearly and look smart to create a solid first impression.*