

Tips for a Successful Interview

08/27/2012 <http://blog.successfully-speaking.com/1/post/2012/08/tips-for-a-successful-interview.html>

When interviewing for employment in the United States, one must be aware of American customs. I recently worked with an international professional who did not realize it would be inappropriate to kiss her interviewer on each cheek upon meeting. Many customs that are routine in one's native country might be awkward in the USA. Not everyone realizes that a firm handshake is the preferred manner to greet someone, regardless of gender.

There are many nonverbal aspects to consider, particularly body language. Our first impression is delivered via visual signals. Vocal and verbal aspects of communication can enhance or sabotage that first image. The individual's listening skills will directly influence the interviewer. Finally, hygiene, preparedness, and organization have an impact on the outcome of the job interview or any other social/business interchange. Here are some tips for the individual who is interviewing for a position in the USA.

Body Language

- Smile when you meet the interviewer
- Shake hands firmly (kissing is not appropriate in the American culture)
- Hold your briefcase, coat, papers in your left hand, so you can easily shake hands
- Use sincere facial expressions
- Use appropriate eye contact
- Walk with confidence and good posture
- Maintain good posture while seated
- Avoid crossing arms; keep your hands on your lap, on the arms of the chair, or on the table
- Avoid fidgeting of hands, feet, pen, or any items on the desk
- Do not play with your hair or jewelry
- Avoid chewing gum

Vocal and Verbal Communication

- Remember the interviewer's name and use it during the interview
- Make small talk and think of this as a conversation
- Speak with proper vocal loudness
- Speak slowly by pausing at appropriate points
- Avoid "OK," "um's," "like," and other word fillers; use silence
- Speak clearly and stress key words
- Organize your responses
- Follow **TIES**- **T**opic, **I**ntroduction, **E**xamples, **S**ummary

Listening Skills

- Show active listening (eye contact, head nods, smile, lean toward the person speaking)
- Avoid interrupting

Hygiene

- Use perfume/cologne in moderation
- Use deodorant, mouthwash, etc.
- Freshen your breath if you just smoked a cigarette
- Keep fingernails clean and manicured (polish is not necessary)
- Keep hair clean and neat
- Wear natural and minimal make-up

Accessories

- Have pen and paper available
- Organize briefcase and notes
- Wear jewelry that is not distracting
- Turn off your cell phone

If you want 1:1 coaching for upcoming interviews, contact lkwilner@successfully-speaking.com