



FIRST 5 MINUTES

It's often said that interviewers make up their minds about candidates within the first few minutes of meeting them. **Richard Heap** brings you five tips on how to make an immediate impact

1. Do your homework

You'll be able to focus more on making that impression in the first five minutes if you're well prepared. Julia Campion, managing director at consultancy First Impressions, says doing some homework before a meeting or job interview is key.

"If you've done the research it shows a bit of respect for the organisation and the people you're going to see," she says.

Matthew Higgs, senior manager at Hays Property & Surveying, says job interview preparation should also include finding out who you'll be meeting and the format the interview will take as this will affect what you're asked.

He adds that you'll be better able to make a good impression if you are on time: "If you're rocking up with a minute to spare, drenched in sweat, then it is really difficult. Getting there early to give you a bit of time is very important."

2. Look the part

What you're wearing affects how you feel, so find out what the dress code is. If you look out of place you'll be worrying about that and less focused on impressing people. Campion says being well groomed – hair and nails for example – is also going to help you make the best immediate impression.

She adds that you should work out which clothes best suit you because what you wear reflects your personality: "Your personal values need to come across through your appearance. Are you organised, on the ball and current? Or are you somebody who's a bit dated, who doesn't really know what's what and doesn't know what to wear when? These are the sorts of messages you give out."

3. The greeting

So you've done your research, you're on time and you're dressed to kill. Now for the greeting. To create a rapport you want your handshake to be firm not hand-crushing and it should last three to five seconds. You'll also

want to smile, use eye contact and remember their name if you've never met before.

Higgs says that when you initially meet people you want to be affable, but avoid those hilarious wisecracks until you have a better idea how they'll react. Get it wrong and you could put up barriers you will spend the rest of the interview trying to knock down.

It's also courteous to shake hands when you leave, regardless of how the meeting went.

4. Sell yourself and be yourself

Right from the start you have to sell yourself. But, warns Higgs, don't go over the top or lie in a bid to impress because you'll be found out.

"I think one of the big things is you've got to be yourself," says Higgs. "If you go to an interview and portray an image of yourself that isn't you, you might get a job that isn't what you want."

In terms of body language you should sit straight and sometimes lean in to the interviewer to show you're listening and be enthusiastic.

"If you sit slouched in your chair with your tie undone and shirt unbuttoned then you're going to look pretty uninterested," he says.

And he adds that you should only use gestures to help make a point because, if it doesn't help make your point, then it detracts.

5. Relax, they want to like you

If someone's giving you their time they want to like you, so try to relax. It will help you concentrate on doing a good job, as well as cutting down on nervous habits like touching your nose, mouth or eyes.

"In job interviews most interviewers would quite like to find the right person for the job straight away because it saves them the task of seeing hundreds of candidates," says Campion. "They're actually looking to find somebody so you've just got to give them a good reason to show them that you're the right one."

Appointments

Moves at Schofield Lothian

Tim Jones is taking over as managing director at Schofield Lothian, as first predicted in *QS News* in March. Jones succeeds Phil Crow, who will become executive chairman at the firm. He first joined the firm in 1987 and was most recently professional services director.

Two Campbells join C&B

Currie & Brown has appointed Colin Campbell and Brian Campbell to the management team in its Edinburgh office, as director and divisional director respectively.

Colin Campbell worked for Edinburgh-based Mott MacDonald for 14 years while Brian Campbell is returning to Currie & Brown after a year working for the family construction business.



C&B directors: Colin (left) and Brian

F+A names Mercier head of M&E

Franklin + Andrews has appointed Stephen Mercier as director heading up the M&E division, based in the London head office. He was previously commercial director at Amec Design & Project Services.

RLF adds associate to London branch

Building consultancy RLF has made Adam Randall an associate and project team leader in the firm's London office. Randall joins from EC Harris where he worked from 2003, after a decade at Davis Langdon.

Appleyards recruits education expert



Fox: new division

Consultancy firm Appleyards Consulting has hired Roslyn Fox to establish a new education division at the firm. She has 30 years experience in education, most recently in the building schools for the future programme.