

# 6 ways successful people make a great first impression

Think you have ten minutes to make a first impression?

Think again.

The first seven seconds in which you meet somebody, according to science, is when you'll make a "first impression."

So, whether it's for an event, a business development meeting, or any other professional setting, you have to act very quickly in order to make the proper first impression.

In order to have a great meeting and be remembered in the right way — while cementing your reputation — here are some important tips:

## 1. Smile

Facial expressions are very important when it comes to making a good first impression. Who doesn't want their personal brand to be associated with positivity?

Smiling's at the start of this list for a good reason. Forty-eight percent of all Americans feel that a smile is the most memorable feature after first meeting someone.

While smiling is important, you probably don't want to have a cheesy and inauthentic grin plastered across your face. Smile too widely and it's going to look like you're covering up nervousness. Or you might come across as arrogant. Even a small grin can go a long way.

Not only does smiling make others feel more comfortable around you, but it also decreases stress hormones that can negatively impact your health. This isn't according to just one or two studies; smiling is highly correlated with longevity.

Since the need to make a positive first impression can increase your stress level, smiling is a way to take the edge off.

## 2. The right handshake

The handshake is accepted internationally as a professional sign of politeness. A proper handshake can convey confidence.

You might be rolling your eyes at this, but the handshake is a fine art. You want to walk the line between a squeeze that comes across as incredibly tight and the dreaded limp fish.

When you're meeting with people whom you trust and have known for years, ask them how they feel after shaking hands, and how your handshake feels in relation to others they've experienced.

## 3. Introductions

You want your first seven seconds with somebody to be productive, so it's great to throw in a verbal introduction as you meet with people.



Even something as basic as "great to meet you" after they greet you can break the tension, and stop you from getting off into a tangent. If you have a hard time remembering names, the intro is a great place to reinforce the name of the person you just met.

It doesn't have to be too involved: when your contact says, "Hi, I'm Amelia," reply with a simple, "Great to meet you, Amelia. I'm Jonah," instead of just saying, "Hi, I'm Jonah," in response.

## 4. Speak clearly

Many people have wonderful things to say but don't speak with any confidence.

Unfortunately, that's a great way to wind up getting overlooked. You want to be able to portray yourself in a positive light and give whomever you're meeting a reason to listen to you.

Don't overcorrect and get too loud, either: Studies have indicated that those who talk in a deeper voice, and more calmly, are taken more seriously.

## 5. Make eye contact

Looking someone in the eye conveys that you are confident and interested in what they have to say.

In Western countries like the U.S., eye contact shows respect to the person you're meeting with. It also conveys a sense of interest in the conversation; likewise, looking away too much will make you appear distracted.

Like with most things, it's a good idea to not overdo it; if you don't take breaks now and again, your eye contact could be viewed as staring, which has negative connotations.

## 6. Use body language

One interesting thing about human psychology: most of us instinctively mirror each other's body language.

Think about how infectious a yawn is in a group of people. A smile between friends is contagious, too. In fact, there's a neuron that affects the part of the brain responsible for recognizing faces and reading facial expressions. This neuron causes the "mirroring" reaction.

So when another person sees you smiling, the neuron fires and causes them to smile in response. Mirroring goes both ways; if you pick up on and reflect back the non-verbal cues of the person you're speaking with, it sends a non-verbal message that you feel what they feel.

Research shows that people who experience the same emotions are likely to experience mutual trust, connection and understanding.

Mirroring body language is a non-verbal way of saying "we have something in common." When people say that someone gives off good energy, they're not just indulging in some New Age beliefs; they're describing mirroring and other synchronous behaviors they're not consciously aware of.

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