

NON-VERBAL CUES

Much of how and what we communicate is done through non-verbal communication. According to some studies, as much as 90% of our communication is done through body language. This is especially true during a job interview. You need to be aware of the messages you are conveying both verbally and non-verbally.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

Handshake

Both men and women should be comfortable offering a firm, dry, confident handshake. You do not want to break anyone's knuckles, nor do you want to offer a limp, sweaty palm. Practice your handshake; this simple gesture can convey a lot to an employer.

Posture

Your body language during the interview should convey a sense of positive energy and engagement. Sit up straight with legs crossed or feet firmly on the floor. Your back should be straight, head up and looking forward. Refrain from slouching, appearing too relaxed, or excessive fidgeting.

Facial Gestures

Smile! There is no overstating the positive impact a simple smile can have during the interview. While you want to come across as serious and professional, you also want to remain friendly and likeable. Don't be afraid to show your interpersonal skills and natural warmth during the interview.

Eye Contact

It is important that you maintain a good balance of eye contact with the employer. This conveys honesty, confidence, and interest. While your goal is not to stare the employer down, you do want to show that you are comfortable with direct eye contact. A good rule of thumb is to engage in eye contact when the employer is asking you a question or when you are responding. When you are thinking of your answer, it is okay to break eye contact.

Nervous Ticks

As previously mentioned, nervousness during the interview is common for many people. However, you do want to pay attention to the way that you react to your nervousness. If you are tapping your foot or fumbling with a pen throughout the interview, it can be very distracting to you and the employer. Work on controlling any nervous behavior before you meet with the employer in person. Also keep in mind that chewing gum is never appropriate in a professional setting.

VERBAL CUES

Not only do you need to be aware of what you say during the interview, but also how you say it. The tone, speed, and length of your responses play a very important part in the effectiveness of your answers. Here are some tips regarding your verbal cues:

Take Your Time

Employers are interested in how well you can answer their questions, not how fast you can answer them. If you are asked a difficult question, take a moment or two to collect your thoughts. Rather than blurting out the first answer that comes to your mind (which may not be your best answer), take a deep breath, think your answer through, and then deliver your response. You can buy a little extra time by repeating the question aloud while you think. By doing so, you demonstrate to the employer that you are thorough, thoughtful, and reflective.

Answer the Question (and then be quiet) Another common mistake job seekers sometimes make is talking too much during the interview. While it's important that you answer each question thoroughly, it is equally important that your answers do not go on too long. While you can expect to do the majority of the talking during the interview, you do not want to bore the interviewer with very long, extraneous answers. Pay attention to the interviewer's non-verbal cues to make sure you are not losing your audience.

Remain Professional and Positive

Regardless of how friendly or laid back the interviewer may appear, your language and vernacular should be completely professional and appropriate. Avoid using any slang, profanities, or stereotypes. At no time in an interview should you voice any negative comments or opinions about former supervisors, professors, or classmates. This can only serve to hurt your candidacy.

"Like, Um, You Know"

Though these filler-type words may be overlooked in casual conversation, you definitely want to avoid using them during the interview. Be aware of these habits and practice to eliminate them.