

7 ways to make a GREAT first impression!

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By Lee Hopkins

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1. Focus on the other

Being known as a 'natural' at interpersonal communication is not just a gift that a select few enjoy. We can all enjoy the reputation of being 'a great communicator'.

Simply focus the conversation on the other person. This takes the pressure off you ---- you don't have to be a witty bon-vivant to be a great communicator.

Avoid interrogating your new acquaintance, and if you are really nervous do your best to control twitches and jittery movements. And (best hint coming...) ALWAYS slow your speaking rate down. Nervousness makes us talk too fast.

2. The eyes have it

Here's a great 'rule breaker': instead of sticking to the 'respect someone's privacy and personal space' rule, when you meet someone for the first time give them a good look right in the eyes.

It's well known that when we look at someone we find attractive, our pupils dilate, a phenomenon that the other person instinctively picks up on. Well, that phenomenon can also be put to good use in our business dealings, too. Notice the other person's eye colour, say 'great' to yourself, and you'll find yourself involuntarily smiling. The other person will pick up on your mood.

But try and avoid smiling lecherously, or as a vampire would when contemplating a tasty new neck...

3. Get over your 'bad hair day'

Whilst 'being yourself' is always a good thing for relational honesty, try and disguise your inherent pessimism and bad mood from new acquaintances.

Even though you know you are just 'having a bad day' or a bad half-hour, the other person will probably decide that you are a 'full-time whinger', an impression and reputation hard to shake.

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A bad mood will spread contagiously, bringing down the other person too. Better to start off positively; you can always let them see your 'other' side on another day...

4. "Mirror in the bathroom" **

Adjust your posture, voice and gestures to those of your new acquaintance. Establish rapport by mirroring their head nods and tilts. Speak at their pace and volume level. You'd be surprised by just how many different 'voices' a successful salesperson uses in a day — they spend a large amount of time mirroring the other person's gestures, voice, language, pace, intonation and volume.

** (a wildly unsuccessful link to an 80s ska/reggae song)

5. Tread lightly...

He's talking about his new Holden Commodore; you're thinking of your new Impreza WRX. Or she's talking about her latest small win at the office and you're thinking about the new \$1M account you just landed single-handed.

Which do you reckon will be more impressive: you gloating about your wins and toys, or you letting the other person have their 15 minutes of fame?

Good manners, as well as psychological research, dictate that to impress your guest you should always keep at the forefront of your mind the question, "How am I making the other person feel?"

Actively encourage others to talk about themselves, and respond genuinely — without bringing it back to yourself.

6. Focus on their achievements

Use flattery sparingly but powerfully by focusing on the other person's achievements, not their personal attributes. Even if they suspect you might be brown-nosing, they will still get a warm glow from a well-directed compliment. "You have a great eye for colour; I really like how you have put the office decor together" is more flattering than, "Nice office".

"I like your new BMW – you must be a real asset to the company for them to give it to you" is more flattering than, "So who did you suck up to?"

Similarly, "You have a great eye for colour; I really like how you've put your wardrobe together" works better than, "You look totally shaggable in that dress".

7. It's never too late

Remember, there's very little that is unfixable in our interpersonal business relationships. There is usually always another chance to fix false first impressions.

Let's say you arrive at a meeting late, having just copped a parking ticket from the previous appointment. Your mood is not, as they might say, triumphant and glowing. Instead of responding appropriately to a new acquaintance's polite greeting, you mumble a grumpy 'yeah' and drop your

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laptop bag unceremoniously into a nearby chair.

Okay, not a good start. But step outside the room for a moment, take a deep breath, count to seven (ten is too long a pause) re-enter the room and look your acquaintance in the eye. Apologise and explain why you are out of sorts. You might even want to turn it into a joke by saying something like, "I see you just met my evil twin."

And remember to cut others some slack if they make a bad first impression on you, too! What comes around, goes around...

When you match consumer psychology with effective communication styles you get a powerful combination. At Hopkins-Business-Communication-Training.com you can find the secrets to communication success. At Hopkins we show you how to communicate better for better business results.

Make a Superb First Impression

By Arlen Busenitz

It is extremely important that people have a good first impression of you. Either you make a good impression or you will suffer for it! It is going to affect how your contact views you for the rest of that conversation. It can affect how fast a friendship starts, or how fast business relationships get going. You have got to make a good first impression!

What is a "first impression"? Simply it is the first thoughts a person has toward you after seeing you or listening to what you have to say. These are made during the first five seconds and then the first few minutes of a conversation. It has been said that a speaker has 5 minutes to convince the audience that he/she has something good to say. How you act, dress, and talk are all going to affect "the first impression". A customer's first impression of a salesmen will have an impact on whether the customer buys. The first impression a manager has of you will affect whether you are hired. How you act in the first moments of meeting your new neighbor will sharply affect his/her view of you. Yes, you need to make a good first impression! It can stop a sale, or it can help you make an instant friend!

How do you make a good impression? Here is one way which is guaranteed to work. Do this and people will have excellent first thoughts about you! This is the key:

When you meet someone (friend or new contact), greet them on the phone, or pass them on the street, act ENTHUSED to meet them!

- Give them a "winning" smile.
- Cheerfully greet them with "hello (name)". Let your voice show that you are glad to see them!
- Act like you are greeting a best friend who has been gone for awhile.

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- If you walk into a group, greet or acknowledge every person. Look them in the eye. Either verbally greet them or at least make eye contact and acknowledge every single person.
- Greet your friends, contacts, and family the same way.
- When someone calls, say a professional "hello". When you find out who is calling, act glad to hear their voice.

What if you DO NOT feel like it? Who cares! ACT enthusiastic to meet them and you will BE enthusiastic to meet them. They will feel important and will be glad to see YOU. You will make an excellent first impression. This technique alone will work wonders for you! You will stand out from the crowd. Customers will want to come back. When a customer sees that you are glad to have them buy from you, they will want to come back and buy MORE from YOU.

You have probably realized that puppies make friends very easily. When they greet a person they

smile, wag their tail and are absolutely happy to see you. They want to be your friend. The result is that you in turn want to pet the puppy, and be the puppies friend. This same principal works with you social contacts. Be glad to see them and they will usually be glad to see you. You will make a good impression and they will like you. This is just one technique for making a good first impression. Apply it and it will work! Find more articles at

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