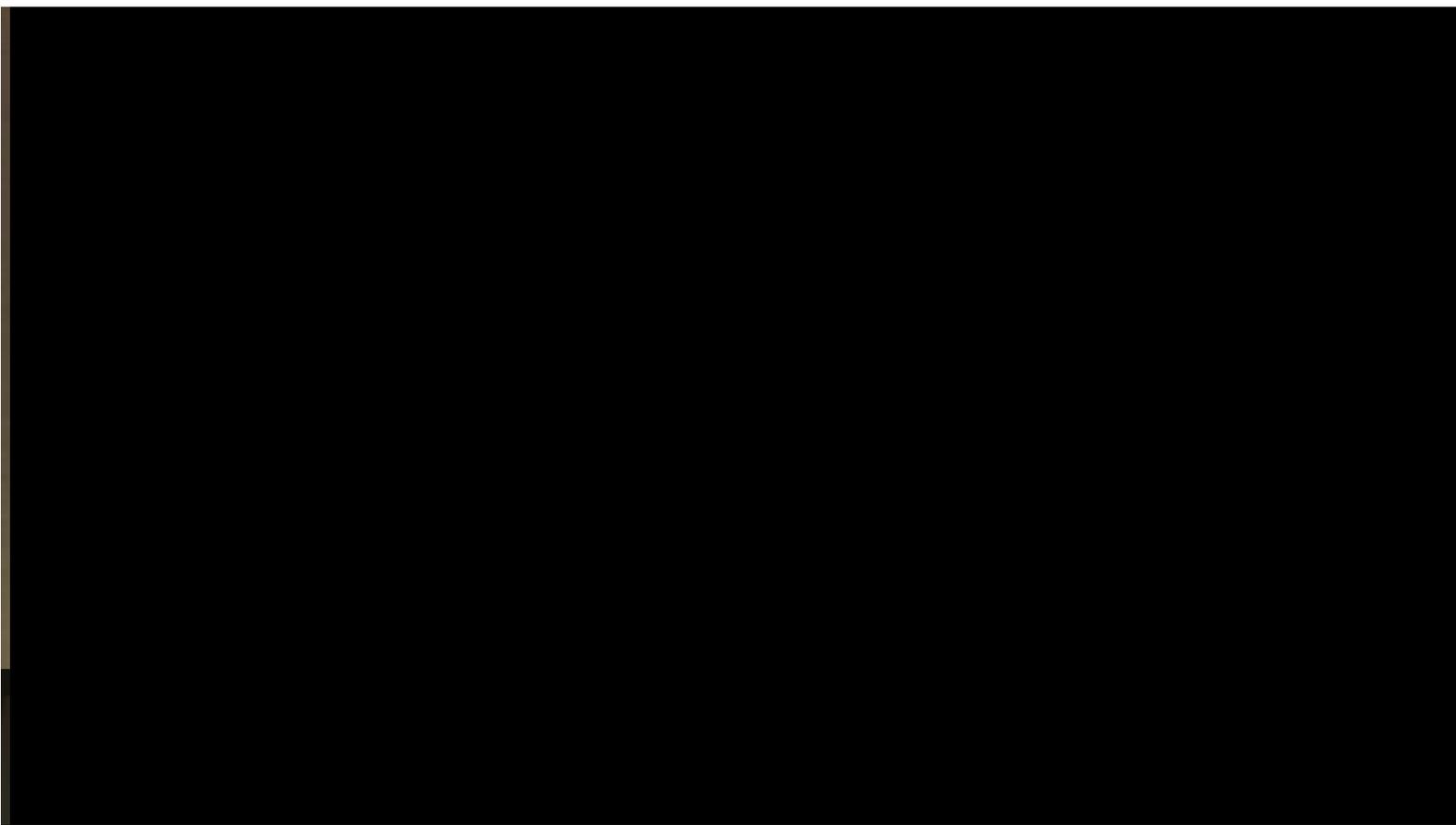




CAREERS

Why the first second of a job interview can make or break you

Marguerite Ward | @forwardist | 2 Hours Ago



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Making a great first impression in a job interview can be the difference between getting an offer and getting passed by. And according to research, you may only have a few moments.

People make snap judgments about each other within one tenth of a second, a [Princeton University study](#) shows. In a blink of an eye, hirers draw conclusions about your [likability](#), trustworthiness, competence

and aggressiveness.

And, the study suggests, those first impressions stick: Hirers quickly begin to expect you to conform to the ideas they've just begun to form about you. If you seem **familiar and friendly**, you could get an offer. If you seem sloppy or overly aggressive, you could be overlooked.

To make those first few moments of your job interview count, follow these rules career experts say are crucial:

1. Dress the part

"Your wardrobe should be clean, pressed and well-fitting," says **Amanda Augustine**, career advice expert for TopResume. "The goal is to look like you belong at the company."

The career expert suggests job candidates do some investigating into the job's dress code by asking around within your professional network.

"Do some reconnaissance online and with your professional network to determine the company's dress code," she says. "If the organization is laid-back, dress as you believe they would for an important meeting with a client."

2. Arrive on time

Nobody wants to look or feel rushed at an interview. Being punctual will help you relax.

"I recommend arriving 15 minutes before your scheduled interview so you have time to register with reception, complete any paperwork, use the restroom to freshen up," Augustine says. "Get your bearings before the interview begins."



Tracy A. Woodward/The Washington Post/Getty Images

3. Pay attention to body language

The goal in a job interview is to appear "confident, professional, and friendly," Augustine says. A firm handshake, a smile and eye contact are crucial to that.

Not making eye contact makes you appear nervous, says career coach [Becky Berry](#). "Keep your head up."

4. Sound professional

When people are nervous, they have a tendency to raise their voices a bit, studies have shown. Resist the urge, experts say.

"We tend to tighten the vocal chords when we are tense, and the high, sometimes screechy sound does not sound powerful," says [Patti Wood](#), a body language expert and author. "Bring down your voice."

For more tips on how to appear confident, check out [body language tricks to exude confidence](#).



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