

Job Seekers: Watch Hiring Managers' Nonverbal Cues For Important Clues



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A friend of mine recently had a job interview. When I asked what the interviewer thought of him, he didn't know. He'd been so nervous he had forgotten to pay attention to the hiring manager's nonverbal communication.

That happens a lot. Most people are so worried about how they come across in an interview that they forget to watch the body language of the interviewer. But being able to read nonverbal cues can increase your chances of interview success.

This is because the way the interviewers react and move their body can demonstrate whether they're listening or bored, whether or not they agree with what you're saying and if they believe you'd be a good fit for the job.

Try looking for these nonverbal cues during your next in-person job interview:

Facial expression. If the interviewer is smiling and looks interested in what you're saying, great. If he or she appears confused (furrowed brow or one eyebrow raised), disgusted (both eyebrows raised and shakes head side to side) or uninterested (unexpressive face or glazed eyes), then take note.

These expressions mean the interviewer might not understand what you've said, disagree with your comments or could have become bored with a long-winded answer. Look for these cues so you can adjust your behavior – such as quickly wrapping up your answer if his or her facial expression shows disinterest.

Eye contact. If the interview is going well, the hiring manager should be making regular eye contact. Pay attention to cues that could indicate things are going awry, such as the interviewer looking around the room, glancing at the clock on the wall or looking down at a watch or notepad a lot.

These behaviors could mean that you're rambling, or that he or she is ready to move on to the next question – or has already made a decision about you as a candidate.

Posture. Ideally, the hiring manager's posture is relaxed and he/she is leaning forward, demonstrating engagement and interest. If the interviewer posture is stiff, or is leaning back and cross his/her legs, feet and/or arms, beware. These cues can signify anxiety or discomfort and could indicate that he/she doesn't believe you're a good fit for the job or that your answers aren't right.



Gestures. Positive gestures are taking notes, nodding "yes" and laughing at your funny stories. Cues to watch out for are crossed arms while leaning back, cocked head to one side with a raised eyebrow and shaking head "no" while verbally responding "yes."

If you're unsure of something, don't be afraid to check with the interviewer. You could say, *"It looks like I might have confused you with my answer. Were you looking for specific examples or for my overall philosophy about people management?"*

Being aware of nonverbal cues will allow you to modify your behavior during the interview and increase your chances of success. Next week: Nonverbal mistakes you should avoid in a job interview.

~ Lisa Quast

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