



4 Strategies to Project Confidence Without Being Arrogant

When meeting a potential employer or coworker for the first time, you want to leave the best possible first impression. Sometimes our anxiety and desire to put the best foot forward can cause us to oversell ourselves, and instead of coming across as capable and personable, we instead appear cocky or egotistical. Use the strategies below to strike the right balance so that you present yourself as confident yet humble.

Prepare Adequately

Prepare for your meeting by researching the company, your role, and if possible, the people you will be meeting. Be familiar with the type of work the company does, but recognize that online research and word of mouth can't tell you everything you'll need to know. Use your research to prepare informed questions about the challenges, successes, and environment of the workplace. Engage in conversation and actively listen. Don't be afraid to ask questions that will help you better understand your colleagues and the business.

Two of the biggest mistakes you can make regarding preparation are:

1. Not preparing, and asking basic questions you should have already researched; and,
2. Assuming you know everything about the company and the role already, and neglecting to ask questions or engage in real conversation with your new colleagues

Set Reasonable Expectations

After researching the company and your potential role, you should have a good understanding of what the business values. Set reasonable goals for your potential role based on how your education and experience fit the company's needs. Don't request additional duties and compensation that are not in line with your experience. For example, a recent college graduate with limited work experience should not expect a management-level role and six-figure income immediately upon graduation. This may be an extreme example, but making egregious demands at the onset of a business relationship will make you appear entitled and difficult to work with. It's OK to negotiate your compensation and working conditions upon starting a new job, but keep your expectations reasonable.

Use "We" Instead of "I"

Acknowledge that many of your professional successes have occurred not in vacuum, but as part of a team. Recognize the contributions of team members while discussing projects you worked through together, and speak honestly about your role. Don't overstate what you did, but instead talk about how your piece of the project contributed to the overall mission, and how your team worked together to achieve a common goal.

Watch Your Body Language

Your body language and nonverbal cues can say a lot about your interest in a position, and there's a fine line between confident and arrogant body language. Start with a firm handshake, but be sure it's not bone-crushing. Smile. Make eye contact throughout the meeting, but don't stare down the interviewer, as that can be intimidating. Lean forward to demonstrate interest in the conversation; slouching back in your chair makes you appear disinterested or indifferent. Finally, avoid any eye rolling or sighs that can make you seem bored or frustrated. Always keep the tone positive.

Interviewing or meeting people for the first time can seem scary at times, but try to keep these tips in mind to appear confident without bordering on cocky.

Please stop by and see us in the Career Action Center if you'd like any additional direction on how to make a quality first impression.

Career Action Center

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