

The Importance of Dress Code and Body Language for Interview and Group Discussion

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Abstract

It is a universal saying that “**First Impression is the Best Impression**”. First impressions are immediately formed just by our appearance even before we begin to speak. In addition to one’s qualification, knowledge, skills and experience, **Dress code and Body Language** make a huge difference in impressing the interview panel. Dressing smartly is as important as speaking smartly, and so everyone should remember to look well-groomed and professional. The term “body language” includes manner, gesture, or posture and eye contact for conveying meaning to the observers and to those who are involved in the particular context. Dress code and Body Language are the two important aspects of Non-verbal communication. Any interaction process involves both Verbal and Non-verbal communication. A harmonious blend of both **Verbal and Non-verbal communication** assures a win-win situation to the candidates. This paper presents **the importance** of the dress code and body language **of the participants** in the Group Discussion and interview in a detailed manner.

Keywords: Dress Code, Verbal communication, Non-verbal communication, Body Language, Interview, MNCs, Personality.

1. Introduction

In today’s global scenario, the art/engineering students and practitioners need to enhance not only their English communication skills, but also to appear for interviews in a smart manner. Many MNC’s and Govt. organizations select the candidates through the selection

process where the candidate has to face many interviewers individually. Each interviewer submits his report and the reports are compared to arrive at a final decision. In an interview, the candidate's appearance, and clothes play a supporting role in the interview process. While the clothes need not be costly, dazzling, new or of the latest fashion, they should be neat and clean. A well-dressed candidate will also feel confident.

2. Appearance

Appearance is determined by the candidate's conduct and by the manner of his/her movements and action. The candidate's appearance can convey a strong sense of trustworthiness to a prospective employer. It also conveys a sense of self confidence, dependability and professionalism. It is obvious that a great number of people agree that non-verbal language takes up more space in communication than verbal language.

3. Personalities

Various components of the personality are Dress, Body Language, Tone and Voice, Countenance and Manners. The candidate's movements and posture must be active, positive, live and responsive enough to make the group and the examiner take him/her seriously. The candidate's body language should reflect confidence, openness, readiness and a sense of humour. The candidate's eyes should radiate sincerity, friendliness and positive outlook.

In case of a telephonic interview, candidates have the advantage of not being seen. On the flipside, candidates can use only their voice to make an impression. The candidate should make sure that he is in the right environment during the interview. The call must be taken in a quiet room with no distractions. Smoking, eating or chewing must be strictly avoided. The interview call must not be packed within a tight schedule. This is because the call can't be cut short in case of another appointment or meeting. Smiling during the interview helps to keep one's tone friendly for it gives clues to a person's frame of mind, which includes body movements of the head, eyes, neck, hands, arm, feet or other parts of the body to reflect different expressions.

3a. Men

- Regular formal shirts, preferably in solids (no stripes or checks)
- Coordinated and sober/conservative colors
- Belt should be the same color as your shoes. If wearing black or navy blue trousers, wear a black belt, black shoes, and black or navy blue socks
- Formal shoes should be polished and in good condition
- Clothing should not be transparent or form fitting

3b. Women

- Formal shirt or blouse with formal trousers/slacks
- Indian formal wear (salwar kameez/sarees) is fine but should be sober
- If you are wearing a skirt it should be knee-length or longer
- Jewelry should be minimal and subtle
- Neckline should be conservative and not low
- Clothing should not be transparent, nor form fitting
- Handbags should be well-kept, moderate in size, neat in appearance

3c. Both Sexes

- Be on time.
- Carry extra copies of your CV/resume.
- Give a firm handshake.
- Be enthusiastic about yourself, the job and the company.
- Be positive and confident.
- Be honest.
- Speak slowly and clearly, and your voice should be well modulated.
- Take time to think about an answer before giving it. Use phrases such as 'that's an interesting question' to buy some time.
- Never say anything negative about previous employers.

- Make eye contact.
- Control your body language.

3d. What Not To Do

- Scratch or rub your head or back of neck. You'll look disinterested, distracted and uncomfortable.
- Drum with your fingers or fidget with your hands on the table in front of you. It will make you appear nervous, or distracted.
- Rub your nose, eyes or the side of face. It will make you look shifty or dishonest.
- Fold your arms in front of your chest. You'll appear arrogant and unfriendly.
- Rock back and forth or slouch down in on your chair. You'll look lazy and uninterested.
- Cross and re-cross your legs repeatedly. You'll come across as nervous and uncomfortable.

4. Grooming

- Hair – Clean and Neat
- Details – No missing buttons, Lint or tags
- Hands – Clean, manicured figure nail
- Fit of clothing – Clean, pressed and proper fit.
- Smell – little (or) no cologne, no cigarette smell.
- Breath – Fresh, clean breath, use a breath mint.



Fig.1. Dress Code in a Group Discussion

Fig. 1. shows the model for dress code in a group discussion. Today, almost every company, (including **TCS, SATYAM, WIPRO, INFOSYS, INFOTECH, ORACLE, CTS, CANBAY, POLARIS, etc**) both IT and non-IT companies have GD as part of their selection process. Earlier, some of the Pharmaceutical Companies like **Ranbaxy, Glaxo, Cipla, Lupin**, and others used to conduct Group Discussions as a part of their Screening Process for Selection of Medical Representatives. People can have serious problems when interpreting body movements and gestures of people who belong to different cultures, as they might not be aware of the fact that they have different meanings in different cultural situations. What one action means and reflects in a certain culture might be totally different or even offensive in another culture; therefore, problems are likely to occur in these intercultural situations. Be observant, learn other cultural nuances quickly.

5. Body Language in Interview

The term “body language” should reflect on manner, gesture, or posture that conveys meaning to the observer. Most of the researchers agree that the verbal channel is used primarily

for conveying information, while the non-verbal is used for negotiating interpersonal attitudes, and in some cases, is used for verbal messages. Body language is especially meaningful in an interview as the interviewer will be paying as much attention to nonverbal cues as to what the candidates have to say. In an interview, the interviewer might find annoying, certain mannerisms like playing with a button or pen. Constant or bold gesturing is also to be avoided, since some of these mannerisms are often triggered by nervousness. On the other hand, some body language show that the candidate is engaging in the interview. Some positive examples of body language in an interview include leaning forward slightly to show his enthusiasm and nodding whenever appropriate, particularly when their interviewer is making an important point. A candidate's verbal content only provides 7% of the message the interviewer is receiving from the candidate. Both the candidate's body language (55% of the message) and the way the candidate speaks, such as tone of voice (38% of the message), are as important in interview answers.

6. Sitting Posture

A candidate's gesture speaks much louder than the words uttered by his tongue. A sloppy posture indicates a careless attitude and a lack of energy. Sitting on the edge of the chair can come across as being nervous and tense. Keep the back straight. Relax and Lean forward slightly to indicate interest and involvement. The candidates should not recline back into the chair fully; this shows that a candidate seems to be bored or disengaged. The sitting posture reflects high confidence and is a must in cracking any interview.

Fig. 2 shows the right posture of sitting of a candidate while interviewed.



Figure.2: Interview Sitting Posture

7. Eye Contact

Eye contact is the best way to show that a candidate is actually paying attention and engaging with the situation. Eye contact is essential in an interview body language, to establish rapport with your interviewer. With panel interviews it is best to look at and direct your answer to the person asking the question, with a glance periodically at the other interviewers.

8. Leg Postures

Most of the candidates want to avoid nervous or bored body language like repeatedly crossing and uncrossing their legs or arms, fiddling with their hair or clothes, continually touching their face, scratching their head. Be aware of the interview body language message your legs are giving. Lots of leg movement is both distracting and indicates nervousness. Resting one leg or ankle on top of a candidate's other knee makes that candidate look too casual and comes across as arrogant.

Crossing your leg high up conveys a defensive attitude in the one-on-one context of a job interview. Crossing them at the ankles or placing both feet flat on the floor conveys a confident and professional look during the job interview.

9. Conclusion

We know that as per the syllabus of Anna University or any of the other universities, one or two hours is not enough for students to practise not only in English, but also they need to be trained and asked to practice proper dress code and body language. They need hours and days to grasp it, and need every day practice. Communication skills as well as the dress code are an important part of corporate sectors for their recruitment process and their expectations about candidates are high in order for them to withstand in the competitive world. The objective of the dress code isn't to draw attention to what you're wearing, but rather to draw attention away from one's appearance and toward the substance of the candidate's knowledge. If a candidate wants to be dressed neatly and appropriately enough, it provokes the committee members to say to themselves, "OK, this person looks fine".

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