

Student's Last Name

Student Sample

Comm 101

Fall 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Attention-Getter: You've just been introduced to someone and the brief conversation is going great, but it's time to part ways. Happy to have met this person, you extend your hand to express your joy, however, their bad handshake leaves you disappointed...confused...and thinking, "but I thought they liked me, too..."

Thesis: I hope to teach everyone how to leave the right impression when shaking hands with a potential employer during a job interview.

Credibility: Through personal experience and library research I have discovered many important factors involved in handshaking styles, and what those factors may reveal about you to an interviewer.

Connection: At some point in our lives each of us is going to have to shake hands at an interview to simply get a job or land the dream career that we've been waiting for, and shaking hands properly can either make or break the deal.

Preview: To learn how to shake hands properly, we must first learn what employers are looking for in a handshake and its significance, which handshaking styles are inappropriate to use in an interview, and the set of key steps which will allow you to give a successful handshake.

TRANSITION

First, let's learn about what potential employers are looking for in an employee based on a hand shake and also the cultural significance of handshakes.

- I. A potential employer can interpret many things about you based on your handshake style during an interview.

- A. An experiment was conducted by a professor named William Chaplin and his students at the University of Alabama to better understand the relationship between styles of handshakes and personality (Kuhnke 157).
1. They discovered that “extroverted and emotionally expressive people are inclined to shake hands firmly whereas neurotic and shy people don’t” (Kuhnke 157) (EXAMPLE).
 2. Also, they found that “women who have an open attitude to new experiences” will also shake hands firmly (Kuhnke 157).
 3. A firm handshake is the handshake of confidence and success.
- B. However, if you’re looking for a career in foreign countries, be careful, because in some cultures outside of the United States, handshaking may not be appropriate in professional situations.
1. It is important to be familiar with these foreign greetings so that one can remain respectful and on good terms with foreign business associates or potential foreign employers if you plan to work abroad.
 - a. In some Asian countries, such as China and Japan, a bow is the acceptable “hand shake” (Martin 29).
 - b. “In many South American, Middle Eastern, some African countries, and parts of Europe” hugging or embracing is common in business situations, whereas in the United States, it is considered inappropriate. (Martin 29) (TESTIMONY).
 - c. In India, professionals will traditionally greet with the Namaste, a spoken greeting, while pressing their palms together with fingers pointed upwards and holding them directly below their chin, sometimes accompanied by a slight bow to show respect (Martin 29).

TRANSITION

Now that you understand the significance of a handshake, let's learn about the different handshake styles and what they can tell a potential employer about you.

BODY

- II. There are many handshake styles to avoid during an interview.
 - A. "The Bone Cruncher" is a handshake style which can bring much pain or discomfort to the receiver.
 1. This handshake constitutes more of a crushing method, rather than an actual shaking of the hand (EXAMPLE).
 2. Oftentimes, this handshake style sends a message of an "overly aggressive attitude to compensate for ineffectualness" in the workplace (Kuhnke 157).
 3. Most people avoid shaking hands with those who are known to give Bone Crunchers, which can make for bad business relations.
 - B. "The Wet Fish" is the handshake style people bring up first and most often when I mention bad handshakes – it's the style that presents the receiver with a totally limp hand, communicating to the receiver a feeling of disconnect or arrogance from the other person.
 1. Interviewers interpret this style as a lack of confidence, or even worse, they may feel that you are "self-important and aloof", or that you have no interest in them (Kuhnke 158).
 2. Just the other day after the school counselor made a special adjustment in her schedule for me, I shook her hand out of respect and to thank her. When she responded with a Wet Fish handshake I left thinking, "well, that was rude, maybe she made the adjustment just to get me out of her office." (TESTIMONY)
 - C. "The Power Shake" is a style which shows that you are in control; you have the "upper hand".

1. During this shake, the initiator (the person initiating the handshake) will shake hands with their palm facing more downward and on top of the receiver's hand, rather than holding their palm out straight.
 2. This is not favorable during an interview because you are communicating to the interviewer that you are in control and have dominance over them.
- D. "The Double-Hander" is a style which is favored by most politicians because it "aims to portray sincerity, honesty, and a deep feeling for the receiver" (Kuhnke 159).
1. In this style, the right hand is extended for a normal handshake, but the left hand also comes in to make contact either with the top of the other person's hand or on their wrist or arm.
 2. This handshake is usually reserved for someone you've already established a personal relationship with or when consoling or congratulating someone.
 3. You would not shake hands this way with the interviewer because it is too personal, and this might also be the type of handshake the interviewer gives you to congratulate you when you land the career you interviewed for.
- E. "The Leach" is the final style, in which the initiator will not let go of the receiver's hand and they just keep shaking.
1. "This is a subtle way of demonstrating control" (Kuhnke 159).

TRANSITION

Now that you know how not to shake hands at an interview, let's learn how to use the handshake that tell your potential employer that you're the one for them to hire.

III. There are several key steps to shaking hands properly at an interview.

- A. Be sure that your hands are clean and dry before you go into the interview.

1. You can even keep a tissue handy to wipe off your hand before shaking in case your hands sweat when you are nervous.

B. "The Firm Shake" is the style you want to go with.

1. When entering the interview, do not be afraid to initiate the first handshake because you are the one who is trying to impress the interviewer.
2. Extend your hand with your palm in the vertical position, halfway between you and the interviewer so that you present yourself as respectful, confident and unchallenging.
3. Be sure to apply the same amount of pressure that the interviewer applies during the shake in order to "create a sense of mutual respect and equality" (Kuhnke 161).
4. While shaking, be sure to make direct eye contact with the interviewer and smile to demonstrate your confidence and calmness.
5. If there are multiple interviewers, be sure to take the time to give the same firm and confident handshake to each person.

C. Conclude your interview with a confident handshake.

1. It is also ok to initiate the "goodbye" handshake at the end of the interview.
2. However, it is important not to reach over a desk when shaking hands, because the desk acts as a barrier between you and the interviewer.
 - a) Instead, move to the side of the interviewer's desk to initiate the handshake and establish an uninterrupted connection.
3. Maintain the same firm, confident and equal structure during this handshake as you did in the beginning of the interview.
4. It is good to "let the interviewer decide when the handshake should end" (Kuhnke 231).
5. While shaking hands, be sure to make eye contact, smile, and also mention the interviewer's name in your closing remarks.

TRANSITION

That is how you shake hands at an interview to land the career of your dreams. Now, let's review...

CONCLUSION

I. Today I taught you about the significance of a handshake and what potential employers are looking for in one, various handshakes that are inappropriate for interviews, and the key steps to shaking hands properly during an interview. So, will you land that dream job by sealing the deal with a firm and confident handshake?

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