



The  
Lukaszewski  
Group

---

Management Consultants  
In Communications

# FINDING YOUR FIRST JOB IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

## Tips & Resources



*Contents:*

- Make the Right Impression
  - Getting the Most Out of Your Summer Internship
  - Twelve Ways to the Top
  - Other Helpful Resources
-

## MAKE THE RIGHT IMPRESSION: Dress, Behavior, and Performance Tips for Successful Interviews<sup>©</sup>

by

James E. Lukaszewski, *ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA*

Job interviews can be unnerving experiences. Here are some suggestions to help you meet the interviewer's gaze with confidence and comfort, and make the right impression.

Your first impression says a lot about who you are. It's your responsibility to create a substantial presence during the interview. Your appearance, preparedness, interviewing skills, and résumé are important to employers who are considering hiring someone they've only just met.

What you're wearing, your neatness and sharpness, is your first chance to make a good impression. Dressing appropriately and conservatively will help you feel more comfortable, and will also help your interviewer focus on you appropriately.

Your appearance and how you sound and act often are as important – sometimes more so – than the substance of your comments.

These appearance tips apply for both men and women:



- Avoid suits with narrow stripes, checks, or patterns. Navy, black, and dark brown look sharper and are more flattering. Gray, light blue, or other pastel shirts give the best contrast effect.
- Women can wear skirt or pant suits to a first-round interview. Always wear an appropriate matching blouse and blazer with suit bottom. Wear stockings with appropriate length skirts (just above the knee), and stockings or trouser socks with pants suits. Avoid wearing open-toed shoes to interviews.
- Neckties should have standard patterns. Avoid the bow tie. They move when you speak and can distract the interviewer. If you must wear a pocket-handkerchief, choose a solid color and make sure it is straight and well pressed.
- Men should wear long, dark socks that cover your calf.
- Avoid flashy tie clasps, cuff links, earrings, and other jewelry.
- Neatness and cleanliness are important. Arrive with neat hair, pressed clothes, and clean fingernails. Polished fingernails should be flawless. Men should be clean-shaven.

Arrive early. Allow for traffic. If you're unfamiliar with the location of the interview, scout it out a day or two before the interview. Once inside the building or office, find a bathroom. Look

in the mirror and check to see that your clothing is hanging properly. Remove your keys, lipstick, wallet, and other bulky items from your pockets and put them into your briefcase or zippered portfolio.

Once you are in the reception area, take a look around you. There might be a painting, photo, or award of note that you can talk about to start your conversation with the interviewer. You can also use this time to rehearse the answers to the questions you expect to be asked.

### Other Tips

Once you've gotten past the introductions, make sure to show the interviewer that you've come prepared. Preparation should include taking out a pen and notepad (and actually taking notes), offering the interviewer a copy of your résumé, asking questions about the position, the company, and the relevant information you gathered on the organization's Web site.

Once you are seated, turn your chair at a straight angle toward the interviewer. If you are offered a chair that swivels, avoid swinging from left to right in your chair. It makes you look uneasy, takes away from your credibility, and distracts the interviewer.

Sit up straight and lean toward the interviewer. This gives you good posture and the appearance of authority, alertness, and interest.

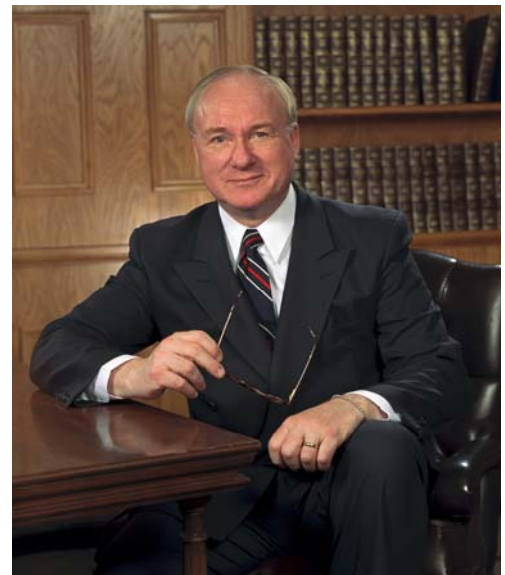
Look at the interviewer. Keep your hands clasped in front of you, clasped on the desk in front of you, or positioned to write (avoid pen tapping). Avoid folding your arms. Concentrate on the interviewer.

Your facial expressions should remain neutral. Appear friendly and open. Smile when appropriate. Use hand gestures naturally, but sparingly. Speak simply and convincingly in a normal tone.

Respond as briefly as possible, while still fully answering the interviewer's questions. Stay on the subject. Summarize your statement into brief, positive, and complete thoughts. Resist the urge to wander off the subject into collateral areas.

When a series of questions is asked at once, pick the one you want to answer most. If the other questions need answers the interviewer will ask them again. You may be asked the same question more than once. Stay alert and give the same answer. Should you be asked a naïve, insensitive, or antagonistic question, stay cool.

There are two principal causes for interview problems: trying to answer a question you are unprepared to answer, and avoiding a question when the interviewer knows you *can* answer it. Tell the truth. The simplest of lies, when discovered, will destroy your credibility. That lost credibility will never be restored. "Tell the truth, even when it hurts."



Just before the interview ends, tell the interviewer you want the job (if you really do). Be enthusiastic. Ask about the next steps in the interviewing process. Thank the interviewer for his or her time, and mean it.

When the interview is over, remain seated briefly while you carefully gather your personal belongings. Be calm; gather your things together and with focus. Remember, whatever conversation follows the interview is still part of the interview.

Always remember to follow up with the interviewer. This shows you really want the position. You can either mail the interviewer a personalized, hand-written thank you card, or send an e-mail. If you send an e-mail, send it as soon as possible. If you're sending a card, send it the day of your interview or the next morning at the latest.

Follow these tried-and-true techniques, and you'll be credible and comfortable while successfully moving through the first impression process to your objective – getting hired.

## **GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR SUMMER INTERNSHIP: TIPS ON NETWORKING AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT**

*(Suggestions collected from 50 Human Resource executives at a recent Lee Hecht Harrison program.)*

### **NETWORKING**

- Socialize with your co-workers!
- Keep track of everyone you meet. Write down their names, titles, addresses, phone numbers, and the context in which you met them and use it for future reference.
- Get the names, addresses, and phone numbers of other interns and build a network. Keep in touch; these people will be good job contacts later on.
- Introduce yourself to everyone you come in contact with – from porter to President. This will help you be remembered.
- Introduce yourself to individuals outside your assigned department.
- Do not ignore support staff or anyone for that matter. Be courteous.
- Learn about your company, and industry, and the types of jobs offered.
- Ask to be put on projects that will give you the opportunity to meet different people, experience different jobs, and know different departments.
- Send thank you notes promptly.
- Stay in touch with the people you have met. Possibly re-visit during vacations. Send holiday cards.
- Maintain confidences. Do not gossip or share rumors.

### **CAREER ADVANCEMENT**

- Be enthusiastic and volunteer for additional projects. Make yourself stand out as a doer and a team player.
- Have direction – know what you want to get out of your internship.
- If you see other areas that interest you, ask for additional projects there.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions! It shows that you are interested.
- Be eager and willing to provide service to all who request it; even if they are not part of your department. You never know where your next job offer may come from!
- Smile and be positive. Never “badmouth” the work that you are doing – there is value in every experience.
- Be professional in every way including dress and attitude.
- Before a project or assignment begins, be sure to get a clear understanding of the assignment responsibilities and any due dates.
- Value the internship as a “real” job. Think of yourself as an employee with accountabilities, not just tasks.
- Listen, observe, and ask questions all the time. Be a sponge! Learn as much as you can from the people around you.
- Do every task – even the most menial – as if your reputation depends on it. Do an outstanding job. Accept nothing less than the best from yourself.

- Never act like you are below doing something.
- Work hard. Be accurate. Be flexible. Be punctual. Write in a business style.
- Ask permission to attend department meetings.
- Get involved in as many different aspects of the work as possible. This will help you determine what you like and dislike.
- Read everything that crosses your desk.
- Ask for informal feedback on how you are doing on the job.
- Be flexible.
- Keep your boss informed of what is going on with you and your projects.
- Read the bulletin boards and the job posting notices. Learn what job requirements fit.
- Learn how to use the personal computer.

#### About Lee Hecht Harrison

Established in 1974, Lee Hecht Harrison is the global performance leader in career and leadership consulting, maximizing organizational, and individual success through services that connect people to work, increase career effectiveness, develop superior leaders. Our Web site, [www.LHH.com](http://www.LHH.com), provides organizations, individuals and recruiters with information on our full range of customized career management services. It also contains information and intelligence on career management topics, and trends and issues facing job seekers and the HR community.

Lee Hecht Harrison is the flagship brand of the Adecco Career Services division of Adecco S.A. , the world's largest HR solutions company with over 6,000 offices in more than 60 countries.

Lee Hecht Harrison  
International Headquarters  
50 Tice Boulevard  
Woodcliff Lake, NJ 07677

Copyright © 2006, Lee Hecht Harrison.

Used with permission of Rena Lewis, Senior Vice President & Corporate Director of Global Marketing.

## 12 WAYS TO THE TOP

### Ogilvy Public Relations Group Account Management Workshop

1. ***Put in the extra time:***

Few habitual nine-to-fivers ever made it to the top. But don't fool yourself that leaving later necessarily means you're "working smarter."

2. ***Keep your ears, eyes, and mind open, and listen:***

The more you hear and see, the better input you'll provide. Listening is the most important. Give people the courtesy of a hearing before offering a counter-argument.

3. ***Be inquisitive:***

Ask your bosses and subordinates questions – and then question their answers! Socrates made a hobby of it, which is why it's called socratic questioning. This is how you'll learn the business.

4. ***Keep on learning:***

Read the daily papers and weeklies that get behind the news. Demonstrate (but subtly) that you're well-informed about the whole spectrum of business and public affairs.

5. ***Write and present well:***

Whether it's a memo of a complex proposal, write clearly and to the point. Your bosses will give you marks for saving them time. If you make presentations, be the best possible advocate for your message and yourself. Training will help, but only constant practice will really make you a good presenter.

6. ***Get and use information:***

Deliberately memorize facts and statistics. Quote known, respected people and publications verbatim.

7. ***Think before you speak:***

Avoid being garrulous at meetings. Better to make two well-timed, carefully expressed observations at a single meeting than frequent inconsequential "look at me" interruptions.

8. ***Never give your boss surprises:***

Don't hide blunders: they'll turn up eventually. To be a good liar you'd need a much longer memory. And another thing: bosses prefer people who give them more solutions than problems.

9. ***Be visible:***

PR's a competitive business. Don't hide. Copy key people in on your most lucid work, but don't brag. Be alert to the fact that your peers can be your most powerful enemies. Related to this, honor confidences and fight the human temptation to indulge in gossip.

10. ***Remember humor and modesty:***

Effective managers still have time to laugh. They also maintain a certain modesty and generosity of spirit.

11. ***Share the credit for good work:***

With the people who helped you. But think twice before you apportion blame.

12. ***As soon as you can, begin writing and speaking about your business to audiences:***

This is one of the best ways to be noticed, inside Ogilvy and outside it.

Copyright © 2006, Ogilvy Public Relations Group.  
Used with permission.

## OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

### International Association of Business Communicators (IABC)

1. IABC Job Centre: This area was developed to help connect IABC members and Web site visitors with employment opportunities throughout the world. The Job Centre serves careers in all areas of organizational communication including: employee communication, public relations, marketing, education, Web content management, investor relations, writing, and editing

*To visit the IABC Job Centre Web site:* Go to <http://jobs.iabc.com> or call (415) 544-4700, and press “0” for the Customer Service Centre

### J. R. O’Dwyer Company, Inc.

1. Jack O’Dwyer’s Newsletter
2. O’Dwyer’s PR Services Report
3. O’Dwyer’s Directory of PR Firms\*
4. O’Dwyer’s Directory of Corporate Communications\*

*To order:* Mail order form to J.R. O’Dwyer Company, Inc., 271 Madison Avenue, #600, New York, NY 10016. For quick service call: (212) 679-2471-Office; (212) 683-2750-Fax

### Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)

1. PRSA’s Job Center: This site offers you the opportunity to post your resumé, browse job listings, find a mentor, and search the salary survey
2. PRSA Member Benefit - Career Tools<sup>TM</sup>: Career Tools is an Internet-based product that offers a comprehensive collection of job search and career management resources located on the PRSA Web site for members only. The resources available from this program include: job Search Steps (pre-planning, resumé, marketing and interviewing/negotiating), assessments, networking, and research resources (links to help you learn more about careers, companies, industries, salaries, and more). It also offers an Online Community to all participants for the exchange of information. The Career Tools’ Career Wizard provides step-by-step directions to conduct a job search and build a personal career development plan. Career Tools, is available to PRSA members at no cost
3. PRSA’s Career Reading Room: Take advantage of PRSA’s reading room, which offers a public relations Career Overview as well as various articles related to career building skill development

*To visit the PRSA Job Center Web site:* Go to [www.prsa.org/jobcenter/main](http://www.prsa.org/jobcenter/main) or call the PRSA at (212) 460-1459 for fees and information.

### On-line Resources

1. Salary information: [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com) and [www.careerjournal.com](http://www.careerjournal.com)
2. Other helpful information: [www.about.com](http://www.about.com) (look under the Job and Career Channel)

\* Particularly helpful as contact lists and career guides for those seeking employment in the public relations/communications profession.