

Getting a good grip on getting ahead

By SUN MEDIA

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Handshakes can play a critical role in first impression.

A firm, well-delivered handshake is crucial to clinching that job interview or contract.

Hands-down it wins over dress or physical appearance, reports a new study from the University of Iowa to be published in September in the Journal of Applied Psychology.

Interviewers generally make up their mind about a person in the first three to four minutes of an interview and "those who have a good firm handshake have higher interview ratings 30 minutes later," says Greg Stewart, professor at University of Iowa.

According to renowned body language expert Patti Wood, "the handshake is the quickest, most effective way to establish rapport with another person."

Handshakes can play a critical role in first impression and it can take up to six months of constant interaction to change an incorrect first impression.

WATCH THAT HANDSHAKE

An overly vigorous handshake recently led to assault charges for a Florida lawyer. Kathy Brewer Rentas is accused of shaking fellow attorney Jennifer Keene's hand so hard that she almost ripped Keene's arm out of its socket.

Moments earlier, Rentas' husband had been successfully prosecuted by Keene. Rentas' forceful hand action landed her a night in solitary confinement and psychological assessment; she is free on \$100,000 bail and faces up to a year in prison if convicted of assault.

HANDSHAKE 101

Patti Wood's tips on the perfect handshake:

- Walk up to the person with confidence -- no hands in pockets.
- Smile briefly.
- Make eye contact for three seconds to increase feelings of trust.
- Make sure your hands are clean and dry.
- Make sure your arm goes fully outward, striking out across your body to your left.
- Offer your hand with the thumb on top. Make palm to palm contact.
- Wrap your fingers around the other person's hand, put your thumb down gently, lock thumbs and squeeze firmly. The rule is to match the pressure. Pump 3-5 times.

YOUR TYPE

- according to Lisa Wright of Etiquette Advantage

What does your handshake say about you?

Weak: Indicates insecurity, secretiveness, shyness and aloofness; lacks self-confidence.

Limp/Coldfish: Indicates disinterest, arrogance and lack of warmth.

The Bone Cruncher: Indicates dominance, control, egotism and a lack of trustworthiness.

Jerky/Awkward: Indicates nervousness and lack of social skills, which in turn reflect on credibility.

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