

## **Making a positive first impression**

**Model Answer**

## **When reviewing the model answer, consider the following questions and critically evaluate your response:**

* How many of the verbal and nonverbal behaviors do you naturally do?
* Which ones do you need to practice developing?
* Who do you know that demonstrates these well that you can learn from?
* How do you think someone meeting you for the first time would describe you? Is that different to how you want to be perceived?
* What would be the value in demonstrating more of these behaviors?
* How can you get feedback from others to help you determine how to continue to improve the first impression you make?

# **Step 1:**

## **Create a list of the verbal and non-verbal behaviors that contribute to making a positive first impression:**

### Verbal Behaviors:

* Form your words clearly
* Use a calm and warm tone
* Use an appropriate volume that demonstrates confidence - not too loud or too quiet
* Provide a warm response to an introduction (e.g. ‘great to meet you’)
* Repeat the person’s name to help you remember it (e.g. Hi Sharon, I’m Arun)
* Create a conversation that is memorable by adding value to what they are saying, or offering to help them, or using personal stories to build rapport
* Prepare talking points (find things you have in common through researching the person ahead of time) as this will help to build rapport and avoid awkward silences
* Give an appropriate compliment
* Vary your tone to demonstrate enthusiasm and passion for a topic (where appropriate)
* Ask questions to show genuine interest and that you are listening
* Use positive language
* Give people a reason to listen to you by targeting your communication to their needs
* Avoid slang
* Avoid ‘filler words’ (e.g. ‘um’, ‘so’, ‘like’)
* Use humor to lighten the mood (if appropriate)
* Take a deep breath before you speak to help relax you if you feel nervous, as this will calm any wavering of your voice and give you more confidence
* End the interaction by thanking them for their time

### Nonverbal behaviors:

* Dress for purpose (check what is appropriate to the situation – never ‘under’

dress)

* Be punctual (or a bit early)
* Smile in an authentic way
* Stand tall with a confident posture (back straight and shoulders relaxed, but not rigid)
* Sit up straight
* Make eye contact (where culturally appropriate)
  + China – eye contact can be seen as a sign of disrespect
  + Japan – it is a sign of respect to not make eye contact with someone else,

instead focus on the speaker’s neck to show respect

* + Hong Kong – you need to lower your gaze when shaking their hand to introduce yourself
  + Australia – eye contact shows sincerity and trust, so maintain eye contact
  + India – use minimal eye contact or avert eyes from opposite gender, when making eye contact divert your gaze often
* Use a confident handshake where culturally appropriate (not too firm or too limp)
* Put your phone away
* Use appropriate gestures to support your points
* Nod your head in agreement to demonstrate interest
* Keep your arms in an ‘open’ stance (don’t cross them)
* Be aware of if you are blinking too much (this shows you are uncomfortable)
* Take notes (it shows you are interested)
* Read the body language of others – what are they trying to tell you?

# **Step 2:**

## **Upload a video introducing yourself to Microsoft focusing on creating a positive first impression. Be creative if you like! Include whatever you think will make an impact and reflect your personal brand.**

**The video needs to be short – maximum length of two minutes.**