

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.