

7 tips to build rapport with the Interviewer

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I read an article late last year that has kept coming back to me in recent months. The article (a study by [Lauren Rivera](#)) from the December issue of the *American Sociological Review* suggested that Employers are often more likely to hire a person they would want to socialize with than the 'best' individual for the job. The article didn't suggest that employers were hiring the wrong people, but that they would prefer to hire someone that they have bonded with, would perceive to be a future friend or who made them feel good about themselves.

Given the amount of focus on CVs, interview techniques, innovative job searches (etc., etc.) most candidates could be forgiven for focusing on the 'technical' side of looking for a job. Getting 'in front' of an employer is for most candidates the primary focus and in an increasingly results driven culture it is easy to forget how important it is – to put it simply – that you and the employer like each other. Talk to any recruiter and they will confirm, if there is a shared past or common interest the candidate has a much better chance of getting the job. I believe this is particularly true in Retail where often there are no technical qualifications to differentiate one candidate from another.

So, if you are looking for a job, what can you do? Here are a few tips on how to build rapport and give you the best possible chance of landing a job offer!

1. **First impressions are crucial** - I wrote about how to create a great first impression) in the first ten seconds previously. It is fairly obvious but if you don't get the first impression right you will face an uphill battle to build rapport. You really want your interviewer to have an immediate gut reaction that they like you.
2. **Positive Body language** – Smile, make eye contact, and lean in when you want to really engage. Again, you are appealing to the interviewer on a subconscious level. Where possible you should try to match your interviewer...
3. **Mirroring & Matching** – This often seen as a bit of a 'dark art' but it is quite simple to do. The best way to learn how to do this is to just focus on one element at a time in every day conversations until you are a little more adept at combining several elements. Where possible you should match voice tone, speed and sound; breathing rates & body posture; speech patterns including specific buzz words and the level of detail. The interviewer will see a similarity in how you come across which was central to Lauren Rivera's research.
4. **Use the person's name wherever possible** - There is a huge amount of research available but in essence people like to hear their own name. This is linked to how your brain reacts on a subconscious level and is linked to your development as a child.
5. **Take a genuine interest in the interviewer and focus on them not the organization** - It is worth setting yourself some specific objectives about what you want to find out about the 'person.' The simple fact is that people tend to like talking about themselves. Be prepared to ask follow up questions and show genuine interest. Show empathy and indicate wherever there is common ground. Again, any chance you get to indicate commonality will give the interviewer the impression you could be a potential friend in the future.
6. **Similar activities , similarity matters** - It is worth doing some research, via contacts and social media, in to what the interviewer does in their spare time and what they are passionate about. Are they a sports fan, do they go to the opera, do they have kids (and therefore do none of the aforementioned activities!)? Where possible you should get this in to the conversation. Once again, if there is a similarity of interests the interviewer will be inclined to move you up the shortlist.
7. **Compliment the person** – Everyone likes praise (method of delivery is crucial for some though). If the opportunity arises give some compliments. Keep it relevant to the interviewer and try not to be too sycophantic!

Overall, keep in mind that you want to generate a sense of similarity between you and the interviewer.