



It's a competitive market. As a job seeker, how can you grab the attention of people and keep it?

It is said that career change is one of the 5 most stressful experiences in anyone's life.

So if you are in the midst of a career change, then it's vital that you create a positive impression in the first few seconds of meeting a recruiter or hiring manager - whether that's face-to-face or online.

There is an abundance of reliable research that explains why the first few seconds counts so much.

Research shows that we humans start forming an impression within the first few seconds of meeting a person. By 6 seconds, an impression is formed and by the 30-second mark, well, those impressions are locked in.

Scientists have concluded that the human brain is binary in its nature. The brain classifies any stimulus as safe or unsafe; good or bad; boring or interesting... and so on.

So to form a good first impression with hiring managers and recruiters, you want to be *positively* classified by the binary brain from the very start.

If you do so, the hiring manager or the recruiter will continue to be engaged.

However, if you make a bad impression, the hiring manager or recruiter's binary brain will switch off almost instantly.

Relevant to this is the seminal research conducted by Ambady and Rosenthal in 1993.

The researchers asked a control group of students to rate teachers across 15 dimensions such as empathy, likeability, honesty, confidence, warmth, and so on. (The control sample students were very familiar with the teachers - having been taught by them for a whole semester.)

The researchers then showed videos of those same teachers to another group of students - who were completely unfamiliar with those teachers - to rate their impressions.



What was amazing was the second group of students who only saw 'thin slices' of the teachers (up to 30 seconds) made almost the same evaluations.

These so-called 'thin slices' were enough for evaluations that closely mirrored the evaluations by students who sat through an entire semester's lectures.

How hard is it to budge first impressions?

The tough news is that initial first impressions are hard to budge. Why? Both thin slicing and fundamental attribution error come in to play.

And if you make a bad impression? It's all lost.

There is research that shows that bad impressions are 4 times more powerful than good impressions.

Now your parents might give you 4 chances. But it is unlikely that hiring managers and recruiters will - they have too little time and too much choice.