

# The secret to being more likeable on first dates and job interviews revealed

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People who need to make a good impression on dates or in job interviews should concentrate on communicating the hard work and effort behind their success, rather than just emphasising their talent, new

research from Cass Business School has found.

In *Impression (Mis) Management When Communicating Success*, published in *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, Dr. Janina Steinmetz investigated how people attribute their success on dates and [job interviews](#), and whether these attributions were successful with their audiences.

She found—contrary to what many of us think—that success alone may not be enough to make a positive impression. Instead, she suggests that people should ensure they talk about the struggle behind their story to appear more likeable.

Dr. Steinmetz conducted three experiments with participants from the United States and the Netherlands, with people from all age ranges (18-75) and with an even gender balance between male and female. Two of the experiments emulated job interviews (using working adults) and one emulated a [date](#) (using students). Participants were asked to imagine themselves in the role of the impression manager (interviewee or 'sharer' on a date) or the receiver (interviewer or 'listener' on a date).

The 'impression manager' was asked to speak about themselves in a positive way and feedback was given by the receiver detailing what they wanted to hear more about—the talent and success, or the [hard work](#) and effort behind it.

All three experiments found the impression managers overemphasised their talents and successes and did not share the effort and hard work behind them—something that the receivers wanted to hear about.

Dr. Steinmetz said it was clear that communicating success and talent in job interviews or on dates is important but it is just as important to tell the story of the hard work and effort behind it to create a warmer,

positive, more relatable first impression.

"A success story isn't complete without the hard work and explanation of why we were successful. Did the success come easy, thanks to one's talents, or was it attained through hard [work](#)? Both of these attributions can be part of successful self-promotion, but my research shows that emphasising effort is more likely to garner a positive impression and people really want to know the [story](#) behind your [success](#).

"For example, if you're on a date and talking about a marathon that you recently ran, perhaps talk about all the training that helped you to cross the finish line. Or, if you're in a job [interview](#) and are talking about a successful project that you led to completion, include a few details about the challenges along the way, and how you overcame them."

Provided by City University London

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