

BODY LANGUAGE IN BUSINESS

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An interesting method for selling clients on you, your company and your services is to use nonverbal communication, subtle messages conveyed without words. These include posture, facial expressions, gestures, mannerisms and your appearance. People buy based on their senses, and everything that you can do to positively affect their senses can and will affect your ability to sell to them.

Psychologists claim that the impact you make on others depends on what you say (7%), how you say it (38%), and by your body language (55%). Since how you sound also conveys a message, 93% of emotion is communicated without actual words.

It's often not what you say that influences others; it's what you don't say. The signals that you send nonverbally suggest attitude, understanding, empathy and ethics.

The human body can produce over 700,000 unique movements. These movements have been partitioned into about 60 discrete and symbolic signals and around 60 gestures. Knowing just some of these can help you communicate better.

Take the handshake for example. A handshake can be soft, firm, brief, long, or even painful. The way you shake hands provides clues to your personality. Aggressive people have firm handshakes. People with low self esteem often have a limp handshake. Politicians typically shake your hand with their other hand covering the shake or holding your elbow. Domineering men often squeeze the hand of women during a greeting. The clever woman moves her index and little finger in toward her palm preventing a crushing handshake. This negates his dominant act and keeps her in equal control. So adopt a handshake that is firm, yet not crushing. Convey confidence and professionalism, not dominance.

Posture is another aspect of body language. A slouch can suggest lack of interest or enthusiasm. Standing straight with your weight balanced on each foot makes you look confident and relaxed. Try to stand or sit up straight; don't slouch.

Open hands with your palms visible should be accompanied by an open posture and a sincere facial expression. Your arms should be unfolded, not crossed. And your eyes should be focused on your client.

Darting eyes suggest deceit. Looking left as you speak can suggest truth. Looking right when you speak may transmit dishonesty. Looking down when speaking conveys low self esteem.

The best advice to women is to go with your feelings. Women have an innate ability to process messages simultaneously in both their right and left brain. They can sense much about others. A woman can "tell" if you aren't sincere. They can "feel" intent. Unfortunately, some women don't follow their instincts, and this has gotten them in trouble. Your "sixth sense" is the part of you that tunes in on nonverbal messages. Learn how to read and use these messages in business, and you'll substantially increase your probability of sales success.

Visualize your customer wearing a traffic signal. Positive nonverbal messages signal "green" to go ahead and approach a close on the sale. If the client's body language changes from positive to defensive or non-believing, the signal is "yellow" and caution must be observed. Slow down and advance carefully. Try to get them to exhibit openness. A defiant, arms and legs "double-cross" with a scowl on their face is a definite "red" signal. You cannot close a sales unless you have a "green" light. If you can get your prospect to mirror your movements they'll be in synch with your presentation and receptive to the sale.

If you are still unable to close, thank the person for listening. Approach sales like renting an apartment. It typically takes five showings before a rental is achieved. Likewise, it can take up to five inquiries before you close on a sale. If they're number four, the next prospect should be the one that buys. And the person who decided not to buy today, will consider you again if they are left with a positive impression of you and your company. Impress them with your professionalism and integrity. Your attitude can affect future sales. Take "turn downs" in stride.

Use your body in the selling process and keep upbeat. If you believe in your services and the quality of your work, others will too. A positive, honest message conveyed by your nonverbal communication will generate far more opportunities than you think. Nonverbal messages can move prospects from suspicion to openness and receptiveness. They can sway "fence-sitters" into buying. You can also use body language to calm hostile or dissatisfied clients.

Learn more about body language and nonverbal communication. Then look in the mirror. Watch how you appear when speaking on the phone or talking with someone else. Look for the signals of openness. Watch customers and follow their cues. Smile from within and without. They'll sense this and be receptive.