Impression Management

Name

Institution Affiliation

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Impression management is a deliberate action focused on controlling the perception of others about a person that includes self or the perception of something or an event motivated by the achievement of particular goals. This action can be conscious or unconscious and mostly has to do with either presentation of oneself or business merchandise. The motives behind impression management can either be instrumental or expressive. Instrumental motives seek to gain a special reward from others by managing their perception while expressive focuses on the desire to take charge of one's personal conduct or self-identity.

The first impression is critical, and it only takes the first five seconds of an initial meeting. First impressions created can take a long time to reverse hence emphasizing on the importance of creating a good first impression that projects the characteristics desired towards a first encounter whether in a social or professional set-up. Even though words are at the very core of effective communication, it is the non-verbal communication that projects the characteristics of oneself towards others (Burgoon, Guerrero & Floyd, 2016). According to research, over 80% of communication is conducted non-verbally stressing the importance of effective nonverbal communication.

The three traits I would want people to know I possess on a first encounter include; Confidence, Friendliness, and empathy.

Confidence

Exuding confidence and assertiveness is a desirable characteristic to project at the first meeting with someone. Effective communication takes place through verbal and nonverbal

channels. While communicating, if the choice of words I chose portrays confidence, the audience perception may emphasize the connection or contradict it depending on the nonverbal communication. Displaying confidence while communicating may be interpreted differently basing on the differences in culture or the variation of the context within which the communication is taking place.

Different audiences understand various nonverbal cues differently. What one audience might interpret as confidence another audience might interpret as cocky or disrespectful (Knapp, Hall& Horgan, 2013). Therefore the important facial expression details to observe depending on the listener include relaxed eyebrows, a relaxed jaw, maintaining eye contact while speaking and not darting eyes away from the audience. Also as a sign of confidence body gestures and movement play a significant role and it is up to me to determine whether I will lean back or forward on the chair, slant towards or away from the listener, whether to keep moving around or stand in one place, what kind of hand movements are appropriate in displaying confidence and what kind of head movements e.g. if I am saying yes then my head is supposed to shake indicating yes. About posture, it’s important I consider what kind of position projects confidence. Should I slant my shoulders back and keep my chin up or should I lean my shoulders forward and angle my chin a little bit. In most cases standing up straight and keeping the chin up often projects confidence during communication but either way, it is highly important to consider the type of audience being communicated to avoid wrong interpretation of posture. It’s also highly important to consider the sense of touch, that is if to extend a hand to shake the listener's hand or not and if so, how firm should I make the handshake, if or not to shake the person's hand at the end of the encounter. The response when the audience tries to touch me is also critical to consider. Voice also plays a significant role in displaying confidence. Rising voice speed tends to

indicate anxiety and fear hence it's highly advisable to use a slower sound speed. The sound volume also can be used to determine confidence levels in that; reduced voice volume is interpreted as a lack of confidence. Employing these techniques in my communication skills will go a long way towards displaying confidence while I communicate mainly in a first meeting.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to assume another person's personality and being able to share his or her experiences (Devito, 2013). Practicing empathetic communication is a critical skill in ensuring that both the communicator and the listener can connect not just intellectually but also at the emotional level. To perfect this skill, I would have to learn how to respond to the feelings that are expressed during a conversation and at the intensity that is most appropriate. Also, it's highly advisable to formulate the conversation in the context that takes into account all aspects because people are going through many challenges and issues in life and a response can be best understood by considering the existence of life issues from a broader perspective. Successful empathetic communications are signified by various signs from the person in contact such as nodding the head and a positive verbal feedback. The application of the empathetic communication skills will assist me a lot in creating a positive first impression on the people I meet.

Friendliness

Any successful relationship is based on good communication. And the major part of good communication is characterized by nonverbal communication. To create a friendly environment during a first impression, it's highly important that I master the use of nonverbal communication

that signifies this intention. These nonverbal signals include constant eye contact, friendly facial expressions, relaxed body posture, and appropriate physical contact.

In brief, with the application of the mentioned verbal and nonverbal communication skills, I can be sure to improve on my first impression meetings and also be able to be known as to possess the desired qualities which are confidence, empathy and friendliness with anyone I come across whether personally or professionally.

References

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