

Body Language ... non verbal communication

Read Your Prospect Like a Book! ... by John Boe

Top sales professionals recognize the importance of **nonverbal communication in the selling process** and have learned to "listen with their eyes." They understand that one of the easiest and most effective ways to close sales is to be aware of prospect's "buy signals."

Body language reveals your deepest feelings and hidden thoughts to total strangers. **Body language is a mixture of movement, posture and tone of voice.** Research indicates over 70 percent of our communication is done nonverbally. In fact, studies show that nonverbal communication has a much greater impact and reliability than the spoken word. Therefore, if your prospect's words are incongruent with his or her body language, you would be wise to rely on body language as a more accurate reflection of true feelings.

Gain the Competitive Edge

There is absolutely no substitute for a positive first impression. Research shows that we decide in the first few moments whether we like someone or not. You can create a favorable first impression and build rapport quickly by using open body language.

- In addition to **smiling and making good eye contact**, show the palms of your hands, keep your arms unfolded and your legs uncrossed.
- Create harmony by **matching and mirroring** your prospect's body language gestures. Matching and mirroring is unconscious mimicry. It subconsciously tells prospects that you like them and agree with them.

You can build trust and rapport by deliberately, but subtly, matching your prospect's body language in the first ten to fifteen minutes of the appointment. For example, if you notice that your prospect has crossed his arms, subtly cross your arms to match. After you believe you have developed trust and rapport, verify it by uncrossing your arms and see if your prospect will match and mirror you as you move into a more open posture.

If you notice your prospect subconsciously matching your body language gestures, congratulations, because this indicates you have developed trust and rapport. Conversely, if you notice your prospect mismatching your body language gestures, you know trust and rapport has not been established and you need to continue matching and mirroring.

Body Language Basics

Be mindful to evaluate the flow of gesture clusters rather than isolated gestures taken out of context. Here are some important body language gestures that will help you close more sales in less time.

There are two categories of body postures: **open/closed and forward/back.** In an open and receptive body posture, arms are unfolded, legs uncrossed and palms are exposed. In a closed body posture, arms are folded, legs are crossed and the entire body is usually turned away.

Here's a quick body language reference guide:

Posture

- Leaning back and closed = Lack of interest
- Leaning back and open = Contemplation and cautious interest
- Leaning forward and closed = Potential aggressive behavior
- Leaning forward and open = Interest and agreement

Head gestures

- Head neutral = Neutral and open attitude
- Tilted back = Superior attitude
- Tilted down = Negative and judgmental attitude
- Tilted to one side = Interest

Facial gestures

- Eye rub = Deceit, "see no evil"
- Eye roll = Dismissive gesture that indicates superiority
- Looking over top of glasses = Scrutiny and a critical attitude
- Nose rub = Dislike of the subject
- Hand or fingers blocking mouth = Deceit, "speak no evil"
- Chin stroking = Making a decision
- Thumb under chin with index finger pointing vertically along the cheek = Negative attitude and critical judgment

As a professional salesperson you must continuously monitor your prospect's body language and adjust your presentation accordingly. By knowing your prospect's body language gestures you will minimize perceived sales pressure and know when it's appropriate to close the sale!