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## BODY LANGUAGE IN FRANCHISING

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# Body Language in Franchising: Mastering Networking

BY ALLAN AND BARBARA PEASE

## The Importance of Networking

To ensure the success of your franchise business, it is essential you build your brand presence locally. After all, even if you are part of a national franchise system, business usually gets done close to home.

One of the best ways to raise your brand profile locally is through networking – getting out and about and becoming involved with your community, peers and other businesses. Mastering networking will open up new leads and opportunities, and generate priceless goodwill around what you do.

### Who, What, Why, When, Where

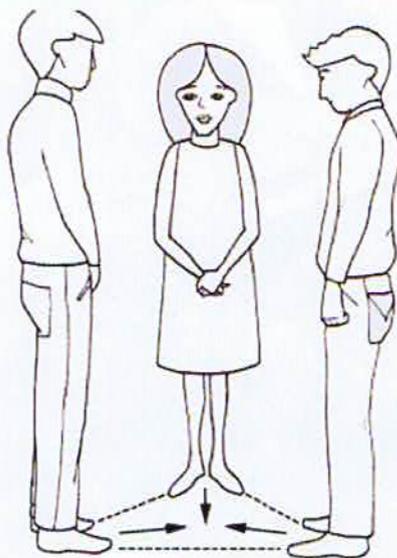
Start by exploring the networking opportunities available to you – including business groups, your Chamber of Commerce, and other community groups and events – and selecting the most appropriate for your business, brand and the contribution you wish to make. Then attend with the intention of presenting yourself as the professional, likeable and confident ‘face’ of your business, with much of value to contribute!

Our top tips will ensure you leave a fantastic impression, and have people clamoring to do business with you. You will also find them effective at your own franchisor events and conferences, where networking and connecting is just as important as the training.

### Join The Conversation

Entering a room full of people can be disconcerting – even if you know some of the people there. Resist the temptation to head straight for the bar (if there is one!). Remember, your goal is to meet people, so go ahead and join the conversation! Here’s how to do it the easy way...

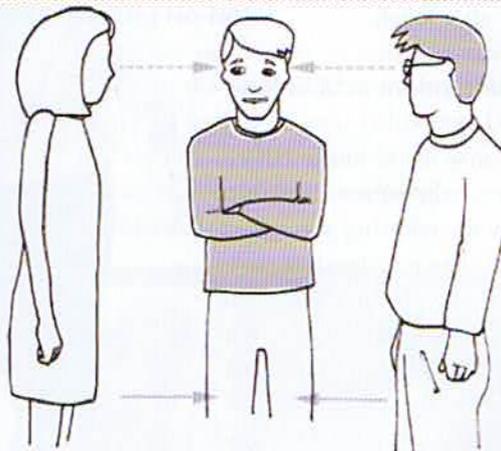
1. Before entering an existing conversation, be sure to read the body language, even if you know the people involved.
2. The **open triangular position** invites you in. It’s easy to spot – you’ll see two people, for example, standing at a roughly 45-degree angle. This creates openness, and also leaves space for a third person (you!) to enter the conversation.



The Open Triangular Position encourages the entry of a third person

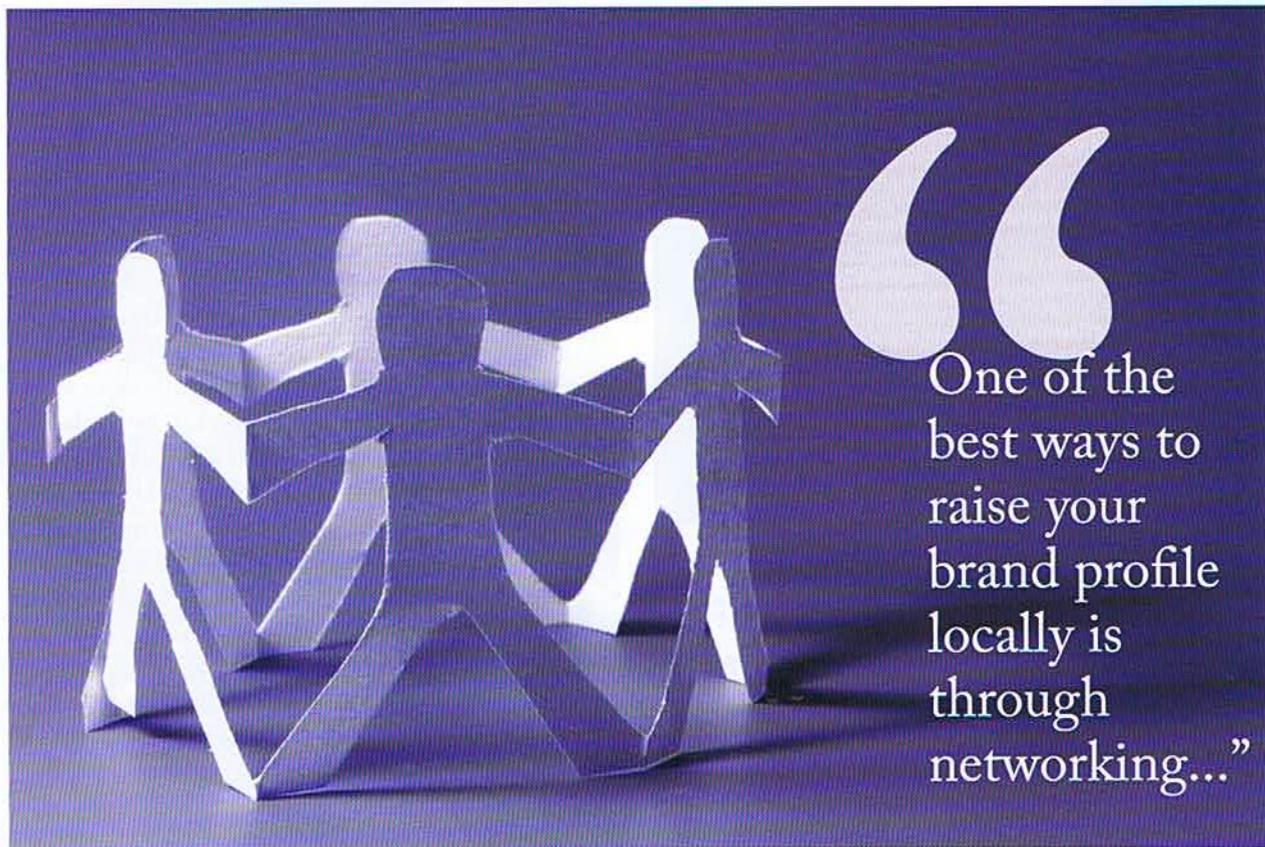
*Stand at 45 degrees to a new business associate you want to feel comfortable around you. This creates openness and also encourages the entry of a third person.*

3. The **closed position** means you won’t be welcome – you’ll see two people standing directly in front of each other, rather than angled away.



Time to leave this conversation if you want to avoid a networking no-no

*Avoid approaching two people conversing directly opposite each other. You will not be welcome.*

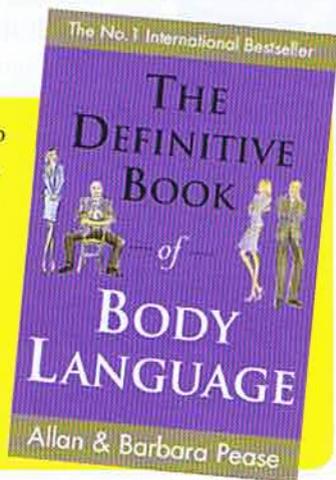


4. Never approach a woman from behind. Research shows women subconsciously fear attack from behind.
5. Never approach a man from the front. Again, research shows men subconsciously fear a frontal attack – and the wrong approach will detract from your first impression.
6. Although it is a generally accepted custom in business to shake hands when meeting a person for the first time, it may not always be appropriate for you to initiate a handshake. Do ask yourself whether a handshake is appropriate before initiating. You don't want to risk looking overly formal or outdated if the event is more casual. Sometimes a simple head nod is more acceptable.
7. When meeting a new business contact, repeat their name to confirm you heard it correctly and watch their reaction. Not only will it make that person feel important, it will also help you remember their name.
8. You've heard this advice: *Fake it 'til you make it...* Well, it's perfect for networking! If you act confidently, people will assume you are a confident, capable person – even if you don't feel that way at first.

### Body Language For Her

- Ladies, avoid standing in the closed position with a man (i.e. directly in front of him), as you risk him (and others) thinking you are making a sexual advance.
- Also avoid smiling too much at male colleagues and peers. Research shows men tend to mistake friendliness and smiling for sexual interest.
- Finally, don't use body language that highlights your femininity – such as fondling the stem of a wine glass or flicking your hair – if you want to be taken seriously in business.

We encourage you to read the full story in Allan and Barbara's latest book, *The Definitive Book of Body Language*. For more information, visit [www.peaseinternational.com](http://www.peaseinternational.com)



### Body Language For Him

- Guys, beware that standing directly facing another person can make them feel uncomfortable and intimidated – particularly if you are taller.
- Also take note: If a woman at a business networking event smiles at you or stands directly in front of you, she is most likely *not* making a sexual advance! She is there for the same reason you are – to network *only!*

### Use open, approachable body language

- Practise open, approachable body language and you'll soon find people are swapping business cards with you.
- Don't fold your arms – even if you feel uncomfortable. (Holding a drink or a notebook in one hand will stop you from folding your arms if you find you just can't help it.)
- Don't clench your fists – keep your hands open.
- Whatever you do, don't emphasise your words with a pointed finger!

### Mirror the other person's gestures

The next time you attend a work or social function, notice the number of people who are mirroring the gestures and posture of the person with whom they're talking. Mirroring occurs naturally between friends and people of equal status – it is the way one person tells another they are in agreement with their ideas and attitudes. As such, it is one of the most powerful ways to build rapport quickly.

In a new meeting with someone, if you subtly mirror their seating position, posture, body angle, gestures, expressions and tone of voice, they'll soon start to feel there's something about you they like – they'll describe you as 'easy to be with'. This is because they see themselves reflected in you, and accepted by you. A word of warning, however: Don't mirror too early in a new encounter, as many people are now aware of mirroring strategies!

### Learn to Nod

Most people have never considered the power of head nodding as a conversation and persuasion tool. The fact is, if you feel positive or affirmative, you will unconsciously begin to nod your head as you speak. Conversely, if you nod your head intentionally, you will begin to experience positive feelings. In other words, positive feelings cause

the head to nod – and the reverse is also true: nodding the head causes positive feelings. It's cause and effect!

Head nodding is very contagious. If someone nods their head at you, you will usually nod, too – even if you don't necessarily agree with what they are saying. Nodding is a fantastic way to create rapport, and get agreement and cooperation.

- Nod your head slowly in clusters of three to communicate you are interested in points the speaker is making. Research shows people will talk three to four times more than usual when the listener nods their head using groups of three nods at regular intervals.
- Beware of unconsciously nodding quickly – this tells the speaker you've heard enough or you want them to finish or give you a turn to speak.
- Finish your sentences with three nods accompanied by a verbal affirmation, such as: "Isn't it?", "Wouldn't you?", "Isn't that true?" or "Fair enough?". With both you and the other person nodding your heads, the other person will experience positive feelings about you and what you are saying.
- After you've asked a question and the listener gives his answer nod your head during his answer. When he finishes speaking *continue* to nod your head *another five times* at the rate of about one nod per second. Usually, by the time you have counted to four, the listener will begin speaking again and give you more information.

**Head nodding encourages co-operation and agreement.**

### Finally, The Big No-No!

Remember how we said earlier to resist the temptation to head straight for the bar? Well, here's a very important reason: You will be judged on your behaviour! Drinking too much will *not* reflect well on your brand or your business, so don't do it, even if the other people around you are! © Allan Pease 2011.



*Allan and Barbara Pease are the most successful relationship authors in the business. They have written a total of 15 best-sellers, including nine number ones, and give seminars in up to 30 countries each year. Their company, Pease International*

*Ltd, produces videos, training courses and seminars for business and governments worldwide.*