

Actions **speak** **louder** than words

BOOSTING YOUR SALES

might be as simple as giving off the right physical 'vibes', says body language expert Allan Pease.

For the uninitiated, body language – or non-verbal communication – probably plays a bigger part in your life and your customers' lives than you could ever imagine, particularly when it comes to creating a good first impression.

When you're face-to-face with someone, 60 per cent to 80 per cent of the message you send comes from the way you look, act and behave.

Of the responses you generate, only seven per cent to 10 per cent depends on what you say.

The rest is made up of intonation and the sound of your voice.

BODY LANGUAGE IS THE OUTWARD REFLECTION OF A PERSON'S EMOTIONAL CONDITION

At least 500,000 years ago, before speech developed, body language was all there was.

Movements, gestures and postures translate into what someone's emotional state is.

We interpret or match their behaviour with what the other person is saying, and from there, attempt to work out what's going on in their minds.

So, it's important for sales people to display the right body language and recognise signs in other people.

You need to 'read' the other person to find out how they feel about the interaction.

THREE TIPS TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION

In life we have about four minutes to make a good impression on someone. Here are my top three tips:

KEEP EVERYTHING UNCROSSED

Men standing with their hands held together in front of their fly display insecurity and a lack of confidence. Crossed arms show aggression.

SMILE

It sounds basic but this is classic primate behaviour.

When the corners of the lips go up,

it creates a 'play' face, which says "I'm playful, non-threatening".

Monkeys and chimps (primates similar to us) respond well to this behaviour.

Intentionally project it.

A smile with the corners of the mouth turned down displays a 'fear' face, which shows that you're frightened or fearful.

It's non-threatening but not a great example.

A good smile should have the teeth visible.

No teeth showing can be taken as insincere.

EYEBROW FLASH

A quickly raised eyebrow permeates every culture.



Monkeys and chimps do it and it's hard-wired into our brains too.

This is an acknowledged welcoming gesture universally interpreted as non-threatening.

Good body language doesn't come naturally to everyone, even if you know what you should be doing.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

To master these it's best to practice an 'uncrossed' posture with the palms visible (another hard-wired response, which says 'I'm welcoming').

Practice smiling in the mirror and that quick eyebrow flash.

WHEN SHAKING HANDS, KEEP YOUR HAND VERTICAL AND MATCH THE PRESSURE YOU RECEIVE

That might feel weird at first, especially for big blokes and it takes a bit of practice.

But people don't like having their hands crushed by someone – nor do they enjoy a handshake with no substance.

Matching the pressure from the other person is very well received.

Make plenty of physical contact

These things will make you easy on the eye and approachable, especially if others around you are not displaying these visual signs.

LOOK FOR PEOPLE WHO RECIPROCATE WITH SIMILAR SIGNALS

Someone who mirrors or copies your gestures is more likely to create a rapport.

You are both showing the same behaviour and therefore feeling similar emotions.

You'll find such people open up more and will usually give better responses to your questions.

Whereas people who don't mirror your gestures may often leave, probably saying 'there was something about him/her I just didn't like'.

READING THE BODY LANGUAGE OF OTHERS

People who aren't likely telling the truth will often touch their face, particularly the nose and make little eye contact.

If the person you're with is not making eye contact it usually means they're pre-occupied with something else, or it may be because they don't agree or aren't interested in what you're saying.

Slouching is another sure sign of disinterest, especially when it's coupled with resting the head in hands.

If they rest their head in their hand with an elbow on the table, their body is revealing to you that they are so bored they might fall asleep.

Body crossing gestures are another sign that the person is closed off to you or what

you are saying. These include;

BODY FACING AWAY

We turn our bodies away from what we find distasteful, unpleasant or uninteresting and this results in a person having their feet pointed in the direction they'd like to go, for example the nearest exit.

CROSSING THE BODY

We cross our body with our arms, hands or legs when we are not interested in what we are hearing or experiencing or if we feel emotionally disconnected. Remember, if you cross your arms, hands or legs for any reason, others are likely to perceive you as emotionally disconnected.

LESS EYE CONTACT

We decrease our eye contact when we lose interest in the person or subject.

In social interactions in Western societies, for example, we meet eye contact with

another person around two-thirds of the time and we look away one-third of the time.

In most Asian regions and South America, however, this ratio is reversed.

CONCEALING THE PALMS

The palms of our hands are rarely flashed when we're disinterested in the subject, topic or person.

We reveal our palms to people we are interested in or are trying to connect with.

STRATEGIES TO WIN BACK ATTENTION

If someone is showing all of these signs, there are strategies you can employ to regain their attention and get the conversation flowing. These include:

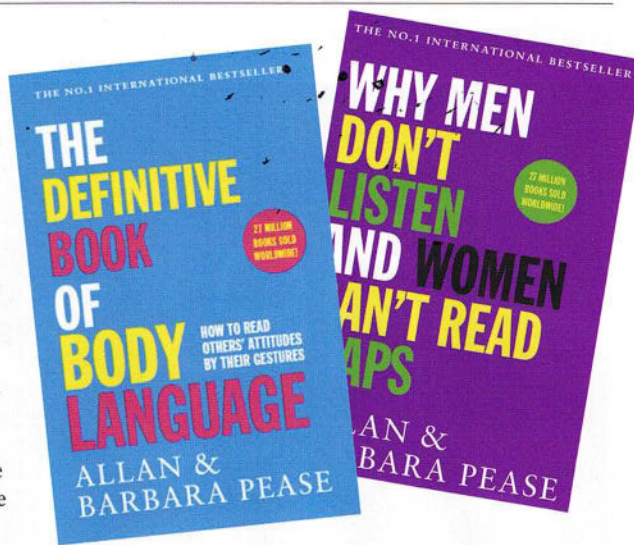
THE ELBOW TOUCH

Gently touch them on the elbow for three seconds or less when talking. This regains their attention without invading their personal space.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Ask open-ended questions to make them re-engage with you and do some of the work.

People love to talk about their favourite subject – themselves – so if you want them to pay attention to you again, ask lots of questions that get them talking about them and their interests.



USE MINIMAL ENCOURAGERS

Keep the conversation flowing with sounds like mmm hmmm... and phrases like, "meaning...?" "uh-huh" and "tell me more..." The more they talk and engage, the easier it will be for you and the more interested they will be in you.

Don't forget humans mirror other humans and if people seem to give up on

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you during a face-to-face encounter, it may be because you're showing them you are nervous or lacking in confidence.

Closing off your body by crossing your arms and legs, for example, can be read by an observer as your being negative, defensive, or non-participative so keep yourself open at all times.

Ask lots of open-ended questions to the person, and listen to their stories – don't rush to upload your own story.

Use open gestures, a wide smile, elbow touching, and leaning in – we lean towards people and events we like, while we lean away from people and events we don't like.

And always keep your feet pointed to your customer, not the exit! ■



Known worldwide as "Mr Body Language", **Allan Pease** researches and studies the psychology of selling, relationships and human communication. Allan - with co-author Barbara Pease - is one of the world's most successful non-fiction authors, writing 18 bestsellers including 10 number 1 bestsellers such as *The Definitive Book of Body Language* and *Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps*. For more information visit peaseinternational.com.