
Reading Your Prospect Like A Book!

by JOHN BOE

Top salespeople and the most successful managers 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 their prospect’s “buy signals.”

Are you aware that your body language reveals your deepest feelings and hidden thoughts to total strangers?

Body language is a mixture of movement, posture and tone of voice. It might surprise you to know that research indicates more than 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 their body language gestures, you would be wise to rely on their body language as a more accurate reflection of their true feelings.

Gain the Competitive Edge

Get started on the right foot. Research shows that we decide in the first few moments whether we

like someone or not. Yes, we also judge a book by its cover. There is absolutely no substitute for a positive first impression. Create a favorable first impression and build rapport quickly by using open body language.

In addition to smiling and making good eye contact, you should 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 are unconscious mimicry. It’s a way of subconsciously telling another that you like them and agree with them.

The next time you are at a social event, notice how many people are subconsciously matching one another. Likewise, when people disagree, they subconsciously mismatch their body language gestures.

You can build trust and rapport by deliberately, but subtly, matching your prospect’s body language in the first 10 to 15 minutes of the appointment. For example, if you notice that your prospect has crossed their arms, subtly cross your arms to match them. 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.

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As a professional salesperson, you must continuously monitor your prospect's body language and adjust your presentation accordingly.

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 them.

Body Language Basics

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

Body Postures:

There are two basic categories; 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.

- 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.

Are you missing your prospect's buy signals? As a professional sales-

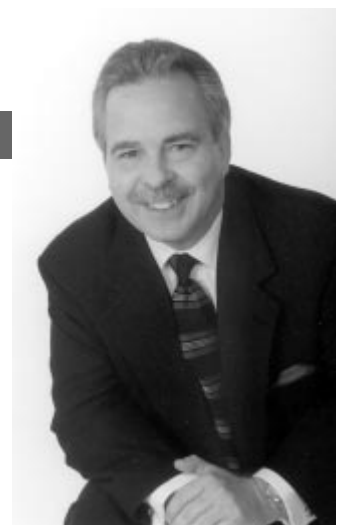
person, you must continuously monitor your prospect's body language and adjust your presentation accordingly. By knowing your prospect's body language gestures you will minimize perceived sales pressure and know when it's appropriate to close the sale!

Action Plan

- Keep this article handy and read it again just before your next client's appointment.
- Before you begin matching and mirroring the body language gestures of your prospects, practice first by matching and mirroring family members, friends or associates.
- During your appointment, make a mental note of your client's three most frequently used gestures.
- Identify your three most frequently used gestures and work on eliminating any negative or intimidating gestures.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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