



Sales Consultants

Sales performance assured

Sales Article #84

March 20, 2024

Sales and Body Language

The First Impression

Your prospects and clients form a first impression based on their beliefs, this in turn influences their behaviour toward you. Their beliefs can be sparked by your dress and appearance, manner, what you say, and how you express yourself. Within seconds of the introduction, they will unconsciously evaluate your honesty and trustworthiness.

At the heart of making the right first impression is your ability not to infringe upon client norms and perceptions, but to build on them through your behaviour, dress and appearance. Managing your first impression with consistency will reinforce your image, and a personal brand that will differentiate you from competitors.

Though dress and appearance are important, this article will focus on body language within a sales context.

Body Language

Non-verbal or body language accounts for 70-80% and 20-30% verbal interpersonal communication. Body language prevails verbal language in both accuracy and validity.

Correctly identifying a client's body language can provide clues:

- When to adjust the pace of your sales presentation
- When to close the sale
- A mismatch of non-verbal and verbal. The inconsistency can show concealment or a lack of honesty.

Body language is structured into gestures and clusters. These are like words and sentences in verbal communication. A single word may not mean much, so is the case with a gesture. The more gestures (words) within a cluster (sentence) the greater the accuracy when reading the client.

Body Language Quick Reference

Posture

Stand straight with shoulders back, both feet firm on the ground and body trunk parallel with your clients.

Eye Contact

Look straight into the client's eyes with your chin slightly upward can communicate honesty and enthusiasm. Eye contact should happen slightly ahead of the handshake and remain just prior to disengagement and last for 5 - 10 seconds.

Introduction/Handshake

To gain control, begin by assertively extending your arm and open hand just before the client does the same and allow personal space for the client to feel comfortable. Your handshake should be firm and painless, the arch of your thumb and forefinger connected with the clients and your fingers wrapped around the bottom edge of their hand. Lean slightly forward. Note: be mindful of cultural norms.

A lack of self-confidence is projected when using one or more of these gestures:

- A slouched posture
- Body weight transferred to one leg
- Hand in pocket
- Chin tilted downward
- Eyes downcast
- Eyes shut for extended periods
- Slow to extend the arm and hand
- A 'vice grip', 'dead fish' or 'finger grab' handshake.

Self-confident gestures during a sales meeting:

- Suit coat unbuttoned and opened
- Upright body posture when seated
- Slight forward lean
- Head tilted marginally to one side shows interest
- Open lipped smile
- Hands visible and open with palms facing upward
- Feet flat on the floor.

Lack of self-confidence during a sales meeting

- Squinting or darting of eyes
- Rubbing eyes with your thumb or forefinger
- Pinching the bridge of your nose
- Tight lipped or frowning
- Running your tongue along the front of teeth; teeth clenched
- Touching and looking at your watch; yawning
- Rubbing your chin
- Cupping your face with one or both hands
- Supporting the side of your face with one hand, two fingers pointing upward.

Being competent reading a client's body language can make the difference between securing the business and failure. It is not common sense; it is not based on manipulation, but a desire to understand and develop a trusting relationship with your prospects and clients. It is a learnt skill. Begin by actively noticing your own body language in a range of situations. What thoughts and feelings trigger a change; what does your body say?



Kurt is a sales practitioner who won major sales awards and created sales records in five industries. Products and services include newly released, consultative, relationship and the competitive field of retail.

He is a recognized sales expert, successful author and respected sales and personal development coach who has guided organizations and salespeople to vastly improved sales performance and profitability.

His clients range from small to multinational companies in Australia, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. Kurt is the author of 21 *Timeless Insights for Sales Success* and *The Most Unlikely Salesperson*. Both available in paperback or e-book versions online, in bookstores and www.salesconsultants.com.au. A third publication *50 Inspirational Sales Articles* will be released in July 2024.

Any questions about this article or to discuss a specific sales situation, then contact Kurt directly on +61 412 252 236 or email kurt@salesconsultants.com.au.