...your body language?

Make HOW you say something as important as WHAT you say

How to make your non-verbal messages more exciting

HERE ARE FIVE WAYS to use body language that will make you more exciting and attractive to buyers and more successful in sales:

1. Smile. Most young workers learn by doing and have little patience for detailed, lengthy directions. So offer them a brief overview of a new duty or task, then let them dive in and see how they fare. You can always go back and offer additional instructions if they're struggling with the assignment.

2. Make eye contact. It's tempting to focus on paperwork or your product. But there's no better way to say "I'm interested. I want to help; and I can help." Especially when combined with a smile, eye contact is very powerful.

3. Nod. When you're listening to a customer speak, you can't always verbally confirm and assure them that you're listening and understanding. Head nodding is an important nonverbal gesture that can do both.

4. Lean forward. When you're sitting, don't rely on the chair's back to help you sit up straight; use your own back. That effort shows your enthusiasm, work ethic and interest in the customer. Leaning back can make you seem lazy or uninterested.

5. Use open-hand gestures. The open hand, particularly the palm, is used for solemn ceremonies, such as swearing in courtroom witnesses. Use open-hand gestures to reflect your honesty and increase your credibility. You'll immediately increase the power of your connection with customers when you make a conscious effort to use open-hand gestures when you communicate. **BAI**

SOURCENOTE: The Competitive Advantage, *as adapted from* The Certifiable Salesperson *,Tom Hopkins and Laura Laaman*

Words of Wisdom

"It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt."
— *Mark Twain*

Email rapidly losing attraction

by Jacqueline Baker

Opinion is rapidly growing across the commercial and business sector that email may in fact be losing its attraction and effectiveness.

EMAIL. It's quick, convenient and spares you that potentially long face-to-face meeting with a dreaded client or fellow employee that you do not have time for.

It makes arranging meeting times simple and can deliver a difficult message without confrontation. But opinion is rapidly growing across the commercial and business sector that email may in fact be losing its effectiveness.

As workers are swamped, devoured and drowned by an estimated 6.1 billion messages which cross the globe each day, the question is being asked more frequently: are we wasting valuable time, ignoring social etiquette and becoming lazy through an email-induced lack of personal interaction?

Hectic day

You are having an incredibly hectic day. You see a phone message on your desk asking you to ring a client who wants an update. But you have a million things to do and think why not take the easy option and send over a quick email?

Likewise, confirmation of a successful meeting or quote, via email, saves time so the real work can continue.

Email serves as a protection shield or a mechanism to hide behind. Some of us are guilty of sending strongly worded emails to suppliers or colleagues because we were too scared to confront the issue face-to-face.

There is a growing trend when using email as the method of business interaction, whereby social niceties are quickly forgotten.

Gone are the pleasantries of asking after a person's health, children or golf handicap, common in conversation but via email it's straight to the business at hand.

Then there is the added advantage of the personal benefits email brings, web links and information sent on a wide range of issues from entertainment to holidays, to sports and politics. Not to mention jokes.

And, more importantly, you are able to copy your boss into correspondence so he or she realises how hard you have been working.

But is all this any more effective than good old-fashioned conversation?

Startling facts from the Consumers Association reveal the power of email may be diminishing.

A recent survey it commissioned found that the number of people who named email as their favourite form of communication has dropped from 14% to 5% in the last year.

In stark contrast. the number of people who said they prefer face-to-face meetings has jumped from 39% to 67%.

More research reveals an estimated 64% of employees send at least three personal emails a day, wasting valuable time.

The potential for them to be forwarded is also limitless. Remember the London worker who sent an intimate email to her boyfriend which was forwarded around the world in a matter of minutes?

The desire for more personal interaction is becoming evident.

A London-based national lottery company are trialing a system whereby email is banned on Friday.

A spokesperson says: "We need to make staff more aware of other forms of communication. If there were elements of the business where you could talk face-to-face instead of sending an email, we wanted to encourage people to do that."

Another potential problem with email is information overload: having to wade through dozens of emails on a daily basis and trying to decide what is relevant.

It is not uncommon for busy executives to get 100 or more electronic messages a day.

Research reveals an estimated 79% of corporate decision-makers delete emails based on the subject line alone and there is a growing trend of secretaries opening senior managers' electronic mail.

The impact of too much email data is a very

The top six steps to achieving personal power

THERE ARE MANY NUANCES to achieving personal power. Based on my own personal experience and observations, I have identified what I believe are six essential elements to self-empowerment.

1. Take Responsibility! This means you must take responsibility for all of your life experiences. You may not be able to control everything that happens in your life, but you do have power over how you choose to interpret the events of your life…. learn to be responsible for that experience.

2. Listen to what people are saying to you. More than just hearing what people say, it is essential that you listen. By listening to what people say, you have the opportunity to learn how you are showing up to them. From there you can make the shifts necessary to show up such that you get the responses that will serve your interests.

3. Focus on maintenance, rather than acquisition. Life maintenance is not as much fun as acquiring new and different things, but knowing the condition of everything in your life and environment is key to having control — having control empowers.

4. Keep a close eye on your finances. Like it or not, money is power. For me it is the power to travel in style. It is critical to know your financial situation at all times. Sometimes consciousness is all you need to get control of this area. Many of us check out, so as not to be held responsible.

5. Give to yourself. Do not tolerate being more generous with others than you are with yourself. Remember, the Golden Rule is based on the assumption that you have a strong interest in your own agenda.

6. Be honest about what you want in your life. Be honest about what you value… then, be OK with that — or not! You cannot begin to have what you want until you understand why you have what you have. A value is anything we try to either obtain or hold on to — what have you been holding onto? Why do you value it? **BAI**

SOURCENOTE: Submitted by Virginia Walz, Educator and Life Coach, who can be reached at Vlwalz@aol.com

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Chris Nabavi

The view from where I sit

WHEN YOU READ management publications, do you only read articles describing practices in organisations similar to your own and skip the rest?

That makes sense. Like most managers, you want to find out what works in your own size and type of organization, what your competition might be doing, and assume those are the kinds of techniques you might adopt, too.

You don't want to waste time reading articles describing different kinds of businesses because they're probably irrelevant.

If you screen articles this way, however, you should take a moment to consider *who your competitors really are.*

Are they only companies in your own industry, in your own geographical area, of similar size?

I'm afraid not.

Actually, *you're competing with every single company out there.*

Yes, W H Smiths, Debenhams, Tesco and Asda, GE and a host of others are your competitors.

How so? you ask.

Your competition actually is *anyone who raises your customers' or employees' expectations.*

Any organization that satisfies its customers or employees better than you do, no matter what type of business it's in, *makes you look bad by comparison.*

For example, customers who call Next to order a shirt just before they call you expect your firm to react with equal courtesy and efficiency.

Employees who learn how Levi's Inc. treats its staff expect you to provide the same type of opportunities.

The fundamental nature of competition is changing. It's no longer limited to the other bank in the neighbourhood, or the comparable store in the next town.

Your competition is *anyone your customer or employee compares you with.*

When you're skimming management publications, don't just ask, 'Which describe organizations like mine?"

Ask instead, "Which ones have my customers dealt with?" and "Which ones might my employees know about?" **BAI**

Conflict
Concepts of justice

Employees jump to conclusions about pay based upon how they believe workers should be rewarded.

Possibilities include:

a)   Contributions people bring to the organization's results (e.g. their effort, education, responsibility, skills, or dedication).

b)   Need (e.g. their family size, income, or circumstances).

c)   Seniority (e.g. their age or years at the company or in the job)

d)   d) Disagreeability (e.g. the difficulty of their working conditions or their inconvenient working hours).

Professor M. Domstein asked white- and blue-collar workers how they would distribute rewards, and got these overall results:

Principle	White Collar	Blue Collar
Contribution	32.7%	8.1%
Need	16.4%	40.3%
Seniority	9.1%	4.8%
Disagreeability	41.8%	46.8%

The two groups were closer to agreement regarding "Disagreeability" and "Seniority." But they clearly view "Contribution" and "Need" differently.

Keep this finding in mind when considering how members of each group assess your own organisation's approach to allocating rewards such as pay, perks, and bonuses.

SOURCENOTE: Peter Makin, Cary Cooper, & Charles Cox, ORGANISATION AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

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real and frightening scenario according to the experts.

Psychologist David Lewis believes people can suffer from having too much information. "Having too much information can be as dangerous as having too little. It can lead to a paralysis of analysis, making it far harder to find the right solutions or make the best decisions."

As the problem of too many emails compounds itself, the experts are already trying to find an electronic solution.

Microsoft is investigating a "digital butler" option, which aims to filter emails. The programme is being developed to scan emails and highlight important names such as major clients, senior management and meeting times.

Despite the advantages of email, when it comes down to common courtesy and friendly business, the old-fashioned ways stand firm against the technology of email.

Even after years of electronic interaction, it seems most of us still appreciate the personal touch offered by phone calls or letters.

Emails don't shake hands. They can't sense moods. They don't smile.

So, as servers buckle under the weight of processing irrelevant emails, employers and companies across the globe are beginning to rethink their email strategies. They are weighing up the positives and the negatives and reassessing their options.

While email in some form will always exist, the current format or email as we know it now, with the regular sound of your email jingle or the familiar sign on your screen, "You have New Mail" may soon be a thing of the past. **BAI**

SOURCENOTE: Jacqueline Baker is a writer on business affairs. This article originally appeared in RISKY BUSINESS, published by Euler Trade Indemnity

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Chris Nabavi is an Accredited Associate of the Institute for Independent Business

Employers don't take equal pay reviews seriously

WITH THE GOVERNMENT starting a new consultation on reducing the time taken to resolve equal pay tribunals, a new survey has shown that the majority of UK organisations are not taking the recommended steps to identify and rectify any gender pay gap in their organisation.

Seventy percent of the HR professionals surveyed by Croner, admitted their firm had not carried out an equal pay review.

A further fifteen percent of respondents to the survey, which was carried out on Croner's www.humanresources-centre.net, were unsure if their organisation had carried out an equal pay review, with only fifteen percent saying they have.

Women's minister Jacqui Smith announced that a new consultation process was to be put in place, with important legislative changes around equal pay tribunals scheduled for later this year.

Prosecution

Under the planned legislation, employers falling foul of equal pay legislation could face prompt prosecution unless they can justify any discrepancies in pay.

An Equal Pay Questionnaire was introduced by the Government in April 2003 to enable employees to challenge their employer to determine whether they are being paid less than a colleague for the same job.

The Questionnaire allows individuals who suspect they are not receiving equal pay to request details of their co-workers' salaries, and calls for organisations to clarify and strengthen their pay structure and review procedures.

The Equal Pay Act 1970 gave women the legal right to be paid the same as men, but figures show that average UK female earnings are currently nineteen percent lower than those of their male counterparts.

Richard Smith, employment law expert at Croner, which is part of Wolters Kluwer UK, says the company regularly receives calls to its business support helpline from employers needing advice about how to manage a complaint of unequal pay from an employee. **BAI**

Work/Life balance reaps greater rewards

Workaholics are stepping aside as role models for dedicated would-be successful business people

WORKAHOLICS, that breed of work-obsessed managers with driving ambition and a compulsion to flaunt their conspicuous success, have been familiar figures in the business landscape since the 'eighties.

They used to be regarded as role models of commercial enterprise, commitment and productivity but this myth has finally been exploded, according to leading employment lawyer Ian Lewis, a partner at Manchester law firm Rowe Cohen.

Former 'whiz-kids', who will probably have accrued their share of health and personal problems and be burnt-out by the time they reach their mid-forties, are more likely to be regarded as liabilities than assets by today's more mature and enlightened businesses, says Lewis.

In today's social climate where BMWs are commonplace and the external excesses of affluence are increasingly thought of as being vulgar, most able managers are much more likely to be interested in achieving a satisfactory work life balance for themselves and their families, than collecting marginally more of the glittering prizes.

Employers, too, find it more advantageous to build teams of loyal, and well-rounded managers whose contribution is spread over years or decades. The 'shooting stars' who boost the bottom line for a year-or-two before being poached or moving to greener pastures are not the stuff that consistent growth is built on.

It transpires that experienced and highly trained people are unlikely to move to another job simply because there's a bigger car and better salary on offer. The financial package is only one consideration.

Talented managers are more likely to take a deeper look into the long-term consequences of changing horses midstream, in terms of their quality of life, personal development, career aspirations and job satisfaction.

Lewis applauds the initiatives of numerous organisations that have introduced more imaginative work life options for their staff and reaped the rewards in terms of loyalty, improved productivity and profitability.

Own home, own time

Employers have to use more imaginative ideas if they want to attract the best talent.

In a global industry that could mean re-examining conventional notions of turning-up at an office or workplace because a manager's real 'virtual workplace' may well be inside his or her head. Where the brain happens to be located when it's working and where it comes to rest afterwards are no longer the defining issues.

Cultural change

"The whole ethos of management has to change before you can bring this degree of flexibility into play," Lewis explains. "It isn't a question of paying lip-service to the concept, you have to really grasp the nettle and put new alternatives in place.

"One of the sacred cows of pyramidal management is that you have to have someone in authority on high, whose influence cascades down through progressively weaker tiers of management control. The starting point for this traditional argument is that you distrust everyone — that if your authority weakens or if you momentarily take your eye off the ball, you will be exploited.

"To give people freedom to manage their tasks and responsibilities within their own parameters — away from the obvious constraints of a disciplined 'work' environment — presupposes that you must have trust in their ability, conscientiousness and motivation. That requires a big sea change in cultural attitudes and considerable commercial maturity."

Location, location

Location, commuting time, a pleasant working environment, pension, share schemes and other incentives, the availability of schooling and other social amenities, flexibility of working hours, in-situ training and measurement of performance are the critical criteria that prospective employees looked for in 2003.

The days when merely totting up the number of years spent arriving punctually at the office and plugging away from 9-to-5.30, as a measure of loyalty and effectiveness are over. Sophisticated managements have more robust ways of monitoring their employees' contributions. Their people-management skills, creativity and enthusiasm are more likely to be recognised, these days.

Stress

"What organisations have to realise is that people have become acutely aware of how much damage stress can do in their everyday lives and relationships," says Lewis. "They know it's a killer. Being able to juggle work responsibilities, a marriage or social partnership, child-rearing and health/leisure time activities without cracking under the strain matters more to people these days than having a bigger car parked on the drive or a holiday further across the planet than their neighbours.

"Employers who want to attract and keep the very best people have either woken up to this major cultural shift or are paying the price for ignoring it. The assumption that the biggest and best fish are those that bite on the fattest bait just doesn't carry weight any more.

"Employers have come to realise that there is no such thing as a 'perfect' job candidate because business, life and everything in it is imperfect. What managements have to recognise is that all sorts of wonderful talents are available to them in incredibly diverse and less-than-perfect people. If you want to reap the best talents, you have to help people organise their lives around the best ways to deliver their contribution — and that sometimes means trusting them to get on with the job in unconventional circumstances.

"Employing one of the more enlightened and experienced recruitment consultants to produce a flexible and diverse employment strategy will minimise the likelihood of selecting the occasional under-performing 'bad apple'. Occasional disappointments are far outweighed by gains in overall productivity." **BAI**

YOU CAN PREVENT releasing deficient products and services to customers by having "internal wrecking crews" test them first.

An internal wrecking crew is a group of employees who simulate an outside market. They prototype the conditions new products will face when launched.

For example:

• Gillette's male employees for decades routinely came to work unshaven so they could try out new razors and blades, one on each side of their face.

• Kodak had a standing policy that employees could have film if they would report back on their use of it.

"Among many payoffs from this policy was the waterproof Weekender'camera," reports Harvard Business School Professor Dorothy Leonard Barton." It was inspired by the misadventures of an engineer who took film on a weekend kayaking trip and ended up in, rather than on, the water."

• Digital Equipment engineers set up an internal wrecking crew to test their prototypes for the workstation 3100. The crews that succeeded in identifying the most "bugs" got to keep the new equipment as a reward.

• Thermos gave the first production run of a new electric grill to employees with instructions to use the product hard.

Those internal wrecking crews at Thermos obliged, and reported back that the plastic shelving on the side of the grill could not support heavy dishes — feedback that resulted in use of a stronger plastic.

SUGGESTION: **Ask groups of employees to operate as consumers and give your new products and services some hard use.** **BAI**

SOURCENOTE: Dorothy Leonard Barton, Wellsprings of Knowledge: Building and Sustaining the Sources of Innovation, *Harvard Business School Press*

> "Events in the past may be roughly divided into those which probably never happened and those which do not matter."
> — *W. R. Inge*

Office Conflict
Communication tips for a healthy workplace

Misunderstandings and communication problems remain one of the most common sources of workplace strife.

WHILE CONFLICT IS INEVITABLE, it need not ruin your workday or cause unbearable stress. Try these conflict resolution tips to make your work environment a less stressful, more productive place.

1. Be specific in formulating your complaints. "I'm never invited to meetings" is not as effective as "I wish I had been invited to last Thursday's marketing meeting."

2. Resist the temptation to involve yourself in conflicts that do not *directly* involve you or your responsibilities. Even if someone has clearly been wronged, allow him or her to resolve the situation as he/she chooses.

3. Try to depersonalise conflicts. Instead of a "me versus you" mentality, visualize an "us versus the problem" scenario. This is not only a more professional attitude, but it will also improve productivity and is in the best interests of the company.

4. In a dispute or discussion where conflicts arise, try an exercise in listening. Before explaining your own position, try to paraphrase and condense what the other is saying into one or two sentences. Start with, "so you're saying that..." and see how much you really understand about your rival's position. You may find that you're on the same wavelength but having problems communicating your ideas.

5. Don't always involve your superiors in conflict resolution. You'll quickly make the impression that you are unable to resolve the smallest difficulties.

6. If an extended discussion is necessary, agree first on a *time* and *place* to talk. Confronting a coworker who's with a client or working on a deadline is unfair and unprofessional. Pick a time when you're both free to concentrate on the problem and its resolution.

7. Take it outside of the group of inquisitive coworkers if they're not involved in the problem. Don't try to hold negotiations when the office gossip can hear every word.

8. Character assassination is unwarranted. Remember, you need to preserve a working relationship rather than a personal one, and your opinion of a coworker's character is generally irrelevant. "He missed last week's deadline" is OK; "he's a total idiot" is not.

9. Know when conflict isn't just conflict. If conflict arises out of sexual, racial, or ethnic issues, or inappropriate behaviour, that's not conflict, it's harassment. Take appropriate action and discuss the problem with your supervisor or human resources department.

10. Consider a mediator if the problem gets out of control, or if the issue is too emotional to resolve in a mutual discussion. At this step, your supervisor should be involved. You can consider using a neutral third-party mediator within your own company or hiring a professional counsellor. **BAI**

SOURCENOTE: Melissa C. Stoppler

Change
Let them plan it

Companies that negotiate change most successfully, use the work itself to motivate the people affected.

THEY ALLOW PEOPLE performing well in their jobs to have a substantial say in structuring their new job, say consultants George Litwin, John Bray, and Kathleen Lusk Brooke.

For example, the ramp division of British Airways at Heathrow Airport — the group that handles baggage, catering, aircraft servicing, etc. decided to go to team working.

Consultants and internal BA advisers developed intricate systems and procedures first to put this approach into place and then to maintain it.

The 'contract' ramp group (servicing other airlines out of terminal 2), however, was left out of this process for some reason.

Several weeks later, when the main ramp group was about ready to give up the team concept in frustration, they noticed that the natural teams in terminal 2 not only appeared to be happy, but were breaking records in terms of efficiency and productivity.

The ramp manager told Litwin, Bray, and Brooke his secret:

He had told the supervisors in terminal 2, "You all have to service the equipment of four jumbos every eight-hour shift. Come back and tell me how you are going to do it and how many people you need."

They came back a week later with a two-page plan and told him they thought they needed 27 people, but might get by with 26.

He said, "Try it with 26 and see how you do."

They did.

It worked. **BAI**

SOURCENOTE: George Litwin, John Bray, & Kathleen Lusk Brooke, in Mobilizing the Organization: Bringing Strategy to Life

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