

(Except from The Salesperson's Guide to Body Language included with every Salesperson Insight Report)



Section 6: Giving Better Presentations with Body Language

When you get in front of an audience to give a presentation, you must remember that you are the most important “visual aid”. What you say with your body language has more to do with the success of the presentation than any chart, graph or slide. Learning how to act in front of the group will help you persuade and appear credible.

INCREASE YOUR CONFIDENCE BEFORE THE PRESENTATION

Increase your confidence before entering the prospect's office or going into the conference room to present to a group. Follow the steps to help increase your confidence. Remember acting physically confident will automatically make you think and feel more confident.

- 1) Stand up very straight and walk a few steps with your hands gripped behind your back, (palm in palm). This will force your shoulders back.
- 2) Lift up your chin and say to yourself: “I'm prepared and will confidently present to this group. I will persuade them to buy.”

This simple exercise lets you be more in control, relaxed and confident. This same technique can be used before any stressful selling situation.

BODY LANGUAGE IN FRONT OF YOUR AUDIENCE

Eye Contact

To build rapport with the audience, avoid looking at your material and maintain eye contact with the audience as much as possible. Studies have shown that the more you maintain eye contact, the more the audience will feel you are knowledgeable, trustworthy, sincere, friendly and persuasive. To keep everyone engaged and on their toes, randomly look into the eyes of those in your audience. Individual members of the audience need to feel that you're giving the presentation for them; not just talking to the group as a whole.

Visual Aids

It's paramount that you maintain eye contact and avoid speaking to your visual aid as much as possible. When you read from your visual aids, your audience will begin to lose focus and their attention will move away from you. Ideally, hold note cards in the palm of your hand with key words written on them to jog your memory. This will allow you to take your eyes off the audience only momentarily.

Gestures with Your Glasses

If you wear eye glasses, consider removing your glasses when listening to the audience and putting them back on when you're speaking. This simple gesture will train the prospect to listen to you when you have your glasses on and speak when the glasses are off.

Hand Gestures

Use slow hand gestures that move in harmony with your words, like you're conducting a symphony. Hold your hands out and your palms down when presenting facts. This gesture conveys certainty and assurance. Avoid delivering facts with your palms up because this gesture can make you look uncertain and your message will seem confusing.

READING THE AUDIENCE'S BODY LANGUAGE

Reading the gestures and postures of your audience will give you clues to their feelings and attitudes toward you and your presentation.

Steepiling

Steepiling is a hand gesture where the finger tips touch but the palms are separated. This often indicates that the audience member has made of their mind, either for or against you. Based on the context and the situation, it can also mean that the person is confident or feels dominant.

If the prospect makes a steepiling gesture after making several positive gestures, i.e., leaning forward with hands on knees or on the table and chin-stroking stops, it's likely they have made up their mind in your favor.

If the steepiling occurs after a series of negative gestures; arm folded, leg crossed, looking away or other hand-to-face gestures the prospect has likely decided not to move forward based on what they have heard so far.



Gestures with Glasses

The prospect who folds up their glasses, puts them away at the end of a presentation is telling you that the meeting is over.

If the prospect chews on the arm of their glasses, they're likely stalling for time and delaying a decision.

Negative Body Language Signs

- Resting the chin on a hand with the index finger on cheek is a signal of critical evaluation. It's likely the prospect is responding negatively to what you're presenting.
- Sitting with arms and ankles crossed indicates that the person may be feeling defensive and closed off.
- Picking lint from clothing will indicate the person disagrees with you but does not want to argue.
- Prospects that rub, pull or scratches their ear while you're presenting to them means they have either; heard enough or they want to speak.
- If the prospect creates barriers in front of them, it's likely they are closed off and feeling defensive about what you are presenting. This gesture is typically made with their arms crossed in front of the chest, hands held together and resting in their lap or even one-arm crossed over the chest. Barriers can also be created with objects such as: briefcases, reports, books or charts.



If you see these types of gestures, try drawing the individual into a dialogue. It's better to get them to open up and deal with their issues or concerns during the presentation than to let them go off and kill the deal later.

Another method for dealing with negative body language gestures during the presentation involves placing a single visual aid in front of the group or prospect and pointing to the item. This will get the prospects to lean forward and breaks the negative posture they are in.