

MASTERING BODY LANGUAGE FOR BUSINESS LEADERS



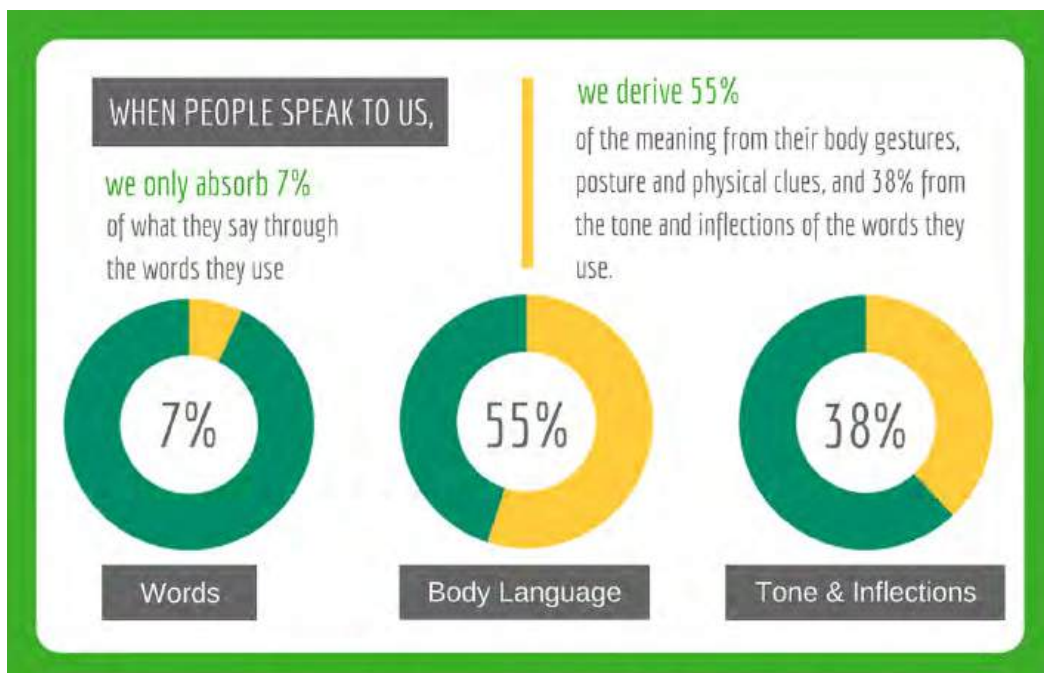
**LEARN TO DECODE NONVERBAL CUES TO
INCREASE YOUR BOTTOM LINE AND INFLUENCE**

By: Saleema Vellani, Stella Damasus & Grant Erhuanga



Body language can make or break business interactions.

What you say is not nearly as important as how you say it. Bad body language will hold you back in your business and you can also miss out on nonverbal cues in your business interactions. Whether you're networking, at a business lunch, on a sales call, or negotiating a deal, using body language effectively can help grow your business, a topic which we will explore throughout this book. It's no surprise that those who have mastered this skill are among the most successful people in the world today. You will learn about body language in general before we dig into the business tips!



FACE

Each combination of facial muscle movements communicates a state of mind.

POSTURE

Posture can reflect emotions, attitudes and intentions.



HEAD

The head can send out a wide range of signals, especially the movement of the head.

GESTURES

There are different types of gestures that can be used to communicate nonverbally.

MOVEMENT

When you move with intention, it means that you know and understand the reason why you are moving from one point to another.

HEAD

Lowering

A lowered head covers the neck with the chin and can be a defensive posture as a result of a perceived threat. When we lower our heads, we also lower our eyes, which is interpreted as a sign of submission. It can be driven by affection (i.e. flirting) or fear (i.e. cautious, suspicious, lack of trust). Sometimes, a lowered head can be seen as a sign of exhaustion since the head is heavy and a tired person's head will sag. A single short lowering of the head can be an abbreviated nod, such as a greeting or used to convey agreement.

Raising

When the head is low, raising it may be a sign of interest and is usually accompanied by other expressions of interest, such as raised eyebrows. From a level position, a quick flick upwards can be a sign of query, i.e. “What do you mean?”.

Oscillating

In most cultures, nodding up and down signals agreement and may be accompanied by smiling and other signs of approval. Vigorous nodding may indicate strong agreement whereas slow nodding may indicate conditional agreement. A nod emphasizes a point, which can range from a subtle encouragement to agree to a rapid and aggressive tilt.

Unmoving

The head often moves when we speak and can express engagement, but nodding excessively does not demonstrate authority and power. Keep your head still to project authority—you do not want to look like a bobblehead.



FACE

Facial Expressions

Facial expressions are one of the most important aspects of body language. They are the positions of the muscles on the face used in conveying our emotional state. We have around 50 muscles in our face. Regardless of race, age, culture, religion, education, or gender, we as humans all express our basic micro expressions the same way.

Micro Expressions

Micro expressions are facial expressions that occur within **1/25th** of a second. They are involuntary and expose a person's true emotions. There are seven micro expressions that are universal, which we'll learn more about on the next page.

For you to be a very effective communicator—which is an essential skill as a business owner—you must develop the skills to detect these micro expressions. You'll be able to pick up more on how others are feeling—and often know exactly what they're thinking, without them saying a single word. Of course, it's useful to be aware of your own micro expressions, too!





Anger

Brows lowered and drawn together, lips pressed.



Contempt

One sided mouth raise.



Disgust

Upper lip raised, nose wrinkled.

7 UNIVERSAL MICRO EXPRESSIONS



Fear

Brows raised and drawn together, eyes open slightly wider, mouth slightly open.



Happiness

Corners of lips drawn back, cheeks raised and crows feet around the eyes.



Sadness

Inner corners of eyebrows drawn up, corners of lips drawn down into a frown, jaw is drawn back and lower lip pouts out.



Surprise

Brows are raised and curved, skin below brows is stretched, eyelids open with white showing, loose jaw.

GESTURES

According to an experiment conducted by psycholinguistics, Judith Holler and Geoffrey Beatie, hand gestures can increase the value of your message by 60%! The most charismatic leaders and influencers know the importance of using hand gestures. There are three main types of gestures: illustrative, indicative, and emphatic.

Illustrative Gestures

This conveys what you're trying to DESCRIBE, usually by using your hands to describe size, height, location, etc. As an entrepreneur, you want to keep your thinking outside the box, and keep your gestures inside the box. The appropriate hand speaking space is usually between the chest and the waist, depending on the circumstances.

Indicative Gestures

This is used to INDICATE, such as show, direct, point at, highlight, bring attention to, reveal, emphasize a point, etc. Try to show your palms, tilted to a 45-degree angle, to signal candor and openness. When being truthful or forthcoming, people tend to use open gestures, showing their palms and wrists and spreading hands and arms away from their bodies.

Emphatic Gestures

This expresses FEELING and CONVICTION. It punctuates, reinforces, and lays emphasis on important parts of the message. It's a tricky type of gesture because once learned, we tend to overuse it. For example, if you're giving a sales presentation or speaking to a large group, you should speak more loudly and more slowly while using larger visuals and more emphatic gestures. With a small group, your tone and gestures should be more like those used in a normal conversation.

The least popular TED Talkers used an average of 272 hand gestures during the 18 minutes.

The most popular TED Talkers used an average of 465 hand gestures – that's almost double!

- The Science of People, 2015.



POSTURE

This is the way your body is positioned when you are standing, sitting, walking, talking, driving, and even sleeping. When in business interactions, it's important to be aware of what your counterpart's positioning is telling you as well as what your positioning is telling your counterpart.

Mirroring

We all naturally tend to mirror each other. It's called limbic synchrony, and it's hardwired into our brains. Even babies do it before they are born, as their heartbeats and body functions take on a rhythm that matches those of their mothers. As adults, we do it when we're talking with someone we like, are interested in, or agree with. We subconsciously switch our body posture to match the nonverbal behavior of the other person, which signals that we are connected and engaged.

Mirroring—when done with intent—is an effective strategy in developing successful business relationships. It is a powerful technique to build rapport and is especially valuable because it increases an individual's comfort level, particularly when dealing with resistance. Mirroring begins by observing a person's body posture and subtly allowing your body to reflect the other person's position. If his or her arms are crossed, then slowly begin to cross your arms. If he or she leans forward, then you do the same. You can even mirror your client's breathing patterns! Mirroring is a proven method, and the key here is to be subtle. In a business setting, when you notice the other person mirroring you in return, you will know that you have developed mutual rapport.



MOVEMENT

This aspect of body language centers on INTENTION. When you move with intention, it means that you know and understand the reason why you are moving from one point to the other. To give off an impression that you are confident, you must make intentional moves so that you do not become aimless. When used effectively, your body movement can support your message. There should always be a reason why we do the things we do and this should reflect in how we approach business interactions.

It is important to be aware of your body movements and ensure they are not distracting from the delivery of your message during interactions. For example, avoid swaying back and forth, pacing from one side to the other, and moving your hand repetitively, as your audience will focus on the movement rather than what you are saying. That being said, you don't need to think so hard about it! Try your best to have natural body movements, as planned and mechanical body movements will only be distracting.

Are you worried about being too self-conscious? Grab your phone, make a video of yourself speaking, and review the recording for distracting, repetitive movements. Practice will make you much better, guaranteed.





PITCHING

As a business owner, you probably know that an elevator pitch is a powerful selling tool and can either make or break your business. We've all been in an awkward situation and have gone blank as to what to say in a new business interaction. Lots of time and effort goes into preparing the pitch, but it's important to be aware of your nonverbal cues and master not just WHAT you say, but HOW you deliver it. A great elevator pitch is short and engaging, conversational, simple and direct, and fresh and relevant.

5 KEY TIPS:

1. **Feel confident.** Be aware of your “fear” micro expression (with your upper eyelids raised) and avoid using a “deer in the headlights” face. When you feel confident, you'll appear confident.
2. **Relax.** Relax and make sure your upper body isn't frozen! When you appear stiff, it has a domino effect in your pitch delivery and how it is interpreted.
3. **Avoid using words only.** Spoken words is only 7% of our communication ability. Leverage nonverbal communication whenever possible. It doesn't hurt to nod whenever it feels natural.
4. **Show your hands!** Turn your palms up toward the other person.
5. **Avoid pacifying behaviors.** These can make you look nervous or unconfident, and include rubbing your neck, biting your lips, fiddling with your watch, playing with your hair, etc.

WHEN PITCHING TO INVESTORS:

- Tell a story to invoke positive emotions and use nodding to affirm.
- Demonstrate ideas with your hands—be expressive!
- Use vocal tone differentiation and communicate the product experience using touch and other senses
- Show gratitude to demonstrate you would be a great person to work with
- Show deference to alphas to communicate respect
- Wear colors that are aligned with your brand and remember to get into peak state to appear and feel confident



SALES AND CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

Building rapport is essential for strong customer and client relationships. It's the basis of everything an entrepreneur does in his or her daily grind. Whether you're networking, pitching to investors, or hiring, you have to develop rapport quickly and authentically. You want to build rapport as much as possible before going into ANY business interaction as it translates into a higher bottom line.

5 KEY TIPS:

- 1. Master the handshake.** You should always start interactions using a handshake whenever you meet someone. You can tell a lot about a person from a handshake, and this is where you can learn a lot about your client or prospect. Having a good handshake signals that you're confident, you can be trusted, and you are who you say you are. Make sure your handshake is firm and you move your hand in an up/down direction. Ensure that your palms are dry!
- 2. Show your hands.** As trust indicators, our hands are very powerful and you want to keep them visible as much as possible. Keep your hands above the table, avoid putting them into your pockets, avoid underarm crossing, and avoid sitting on or tucking your hands.
- 3. Boost your confidence.** Power posing can boost your confidence levels by increasing your good hormones (testosterone) and decreasing your stress hormones (cortisol). Certain power poses don't just change how others perceive you, but also how you feel about yourself. Before meeting with a client or prospect, use expansive poses, claim your territory, draw your shoulders back, keep your head up, and plant your legs widely. Of course, you only want to do these power poses BEFORE the meeting.
- 4. Leverage learning styles.** Use your client's learning style to bond with them. It will help reach the client more effectively because they'll feel like you're speaking their language. Are they a visual learner, an audio learner, or an experiential learner?
- 5. Smile authentically.** Don't stop yourself from smiling when it feels right!

The power of touch is very strong and speeds up your connection with others.
The handshake is equivalent to 3 hours of face-to-face time.



CUSTOMER VALIDATION

As you probably already know, customer validation is essential to improve your product, get testimonials, build rapport, and upsell your customers. Body language cues can help with customer validation as it can make customers feel comfortable to open up and be honest.

5 KEY TIPS:

- 1. Mirror, mirror, mirror!** Mirror your customer's body language subtly and effectively. Match your client's pace or cadence to get on their level, copy his or her facial expressions (we already do this subconsciously) and use similar words. Remember, the secret is to be subtle and natural!
- 2. Name it and tame it.** This refers to naming an emotion that comes up in the conversation and tame it. For example, if there is uncertainty that needs clarity, you can state something like "Maybe I'm wrong here, but...".
- 3. Use nodding.** Being aware of your nodding habits is important, as mentioned earlier. Nodding helps emphasize agreement and increases rapport.
- 4. Say your client's name.** How do you break through all the noise and clatter for your customer's attention? The one word that immediately commands someone's attention is their name. Recalling and integrating your client's name helps build loyalty and rapport. Just remember not to overuse it!
- 5. Let your customer hold your product.** This doesn't apply in the same way to service-based businesses, which should enable customers to experience or get a taste of their service. If you have a product, letting your customer physically hold it will enable them to feel ownership and want to have it.

Not many of us think about how our nonverbal messages are portrayed or know how to align their verbal and nonverbal communication. If there's a mismatch, the listener will always believe the nonverbal message. As the saying goes, first impressions count and our brain makes a rule for that person.

1. What do you want your brand to say?
2. Are your nonverbal messaging and brand in sync?
3. Think of the three ideal traits that describe what you want to portray.



NETWORKING

For many of us, networking events can be extremely awkward. Networking is very important for any business, especially since we're in the era of collaboration. It doesn't have to be all small talk. We can actually turn that awkwardness around by using nonverbal cues to get people to approach us and approach them without feeling hesitant.

According to Dr. Bertram Gawronski, first impressions are “accurate, immediate, and lasting”. They are so powerful that our brain treats them as rules. When we meet someone, our brain makes a rule for that person, and any follow-up interactions are exceptions to that rule. So it's important to be aware of the impression we give off!

5 KEY TIPS:

- 1. Be expressive.** Use your hands and be expressive in your face. Have an authentic smile and an engaged face. Using “hmm” and “ahh”, nodding slightly and maintaining eye contact will let the other person know you're listening to them. Be mindful of your voice tone.
- 2. Use your eyebrows.** Use the eyebrow flash as a subtle invitation cue when wanting someone to approach you—without appearing flirtatious. When you're talking to others, keep your eyebrows lifted and avoid overhead gazing which can make others feel like you're distracted.
- 3. Be aware of your body movements.** Use a slightly angled pose and keep your gestures within or close to your torso area. Approach people from the side or front rather than from behind, especially women. Move slowly and don't pace back and forth around the room.
- 4. Approach approachable people.** Look for people with loose arms and an open stance, who are not on their phones. Avoid going up to people by the restroom, exit, or right after they get food. The secret is to stand where people go right after they get their drink.
- 5. Have a story toolbox.** It's always great to pull out a story about yourself or your business when talking to someone new. It helps break the ice and feels more personable, leading to a deeper, more meaningful conversation.



NEGOTIATION

Most people don't realize that we negotiate all the time. We all approach negotiation differently.

5 KEY TIPS:

- 1. Negotiate in person.** Of course, this isn't always possible, but insist on a video call if you have to negotiate virtually. Even if you're on a phone call, use your body language as if your counterpart was right in front of you. Your tones and inflections would be affected by your body language as well. When you're smiling, your counterpart can tell the difference from when you're not.
- 2. Research, research, research!** Try to find information about your counterpart before a negotiation. Sometimes we focus on what and how they write, but it's important to also observe their body language by looking at photos and videos of them.
- 3. Position the decision maker well.** People have a harder time making a decision when they can't see who is approaching them. Especially in a public place, people with their back to the open room have higher heart rates and blood pressure, making it hard for them to relax. When you're in a public place, make sure the decision-making person is facing the open room to put them more at ease to make a positive decision.
- 4. Use your hands.** Use your hands to demonstrate the importance of each issue. You can also use a fist pump to emphasize a point or show that you're strong in your opinion.
- 5. Mirror your counterpart.** You learned about mirroring earlier, but when it comes to negotiation, you should identify your counterpart's normal—or baseline—body language in order to read them accurately while negotiating. The best time to get a feel for how your counterpart acts in a neutral setting is before the negotiation starts, during the “small talk” phase. “Baselining” entails observing others when they are not feeling anxious or stressed out.



INTERVIEWING NEW TEAM MEMBERS

Finding the right people is the single largest problem in business today. Who you hire is essential for your business to succeed and is even more important than your strategy and product. Many people have been trained to place more emphasis on spoken words instead of picking up on nonverbal signals and trusting their “gut” instinct.

When hiring new team members or contractors, you want to portray body language that will attract the right candidates. You also want to be able to notice their natural body language. For the interviewee, it is likely that their body language will have more of a positive impact on their success than anything they say.

5 KEY TIPS:

- 1. Use the power of silence.** You want your interviewee to talk as much as possible so you can learn about them. When they finish speaking, remain silent for an extra half to full second to see if they want to continue talking. Your interviewee will likely fill that silence with more detailed, deeper information.
- 2. Do not mirror when interviewing.** You want your interviewee to show their body language that they do naturally. You can nod and tilt your head to show interest and engagement.
- 3. Watch for self-soothing behaviors.** These include the “leg cleanse” (people rubbing the top of their legs with the palms of their hands), nonverbal signs of doubt (head turned away or down to one side), self-touch, fidgeting, picking “dirt” from under nails or cuticles, squeezing or pinching skin on their arms, and playing with their hair or jewelry.
- 4. Watch their eye contact.** If the interviewee does not maintain eye contact, this is indicative that he or she may not be comfortable enough to hold the gaze of a peer or client. This is especially important if the job entails lots of interaction with other team members and clients, such as helping close deals.
- 5. Watch for dishonesty.** Hesitation, shifting eyes, question inflection, “um” or stalling before answering, frozen upper body or face, one-sided shoulder shrug, and repeating the question are all signs of dishonesty.

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

We hope you found our ebook useful in order to detecting nonverbal cues during business interactions. The more aware you are of your own body language and how you interact, the easier it will be to improve your nonverbal communication and accurately read others. Catching micro expressions may be challenging if you're not used to it, but the next time you watch a movie or TV show, pay extra attention when watching the characters' facial expressions.

Practicing the tips throughout this ebook can help transform your business relationships—and relationships in general—and we all know how important relationships are in business. Also, since circumstances vary, we have to be careful not to be quick to judge when inaccurately reading others' body language. People might react in different ways and may not be paying attention to how they are coming across. Though there are so many factors at play, it is amazing how all humans express our basic emotions in the same way!

If you would like to find out more about our trainings and workshops, reach out to Saleema at saleema@innovazing.com.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

SALEEMA VELLANI, FOUNDER & COO OF INNOVAZING



Saleema Vellani is the Founder and COO of Innovazing, which helps entrepreneurs transform their businesses by transforming themselves. After launching and exiting numerous ventures, her passion lies in working with innovators and changemakers to create marketing and business optimization strategies and coach them throughout execution. Both an entrepreneur and “intrapreneur”, Saleema has consulted for social impact organizations, such as the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, as well as fast-growing companies, such as Upwork. In addition to being a speaker and mentor, she teaches entrepreneurship at Johns Hopkins University and facilitates workshops at a variety of academic institutions and government agencies.

STELLA DAMASUS, AWARD-WINNING ACTRESS



Stella Damasus is a Nigerian-born entrepreneur and award-winning actress. She is the Co-Founder of Index Two Studios, Mon Afrik TV and i2Radio, which are all disruptive and innovative entertainment companies. Stella launched the Stella Damasus Arts Foundation to provide economic, intellectual and emotional support to society, using the arts as a primary tool. She is also an ambassador for several women’s rights and social impact organizations. Stella has spoken at over 200 events, reaching nearly 10 million people, on various topics such as leadership, body language, women’s rights, girls’ education and emotional intelligence. Stella sees herself as a person that has been placed on earth for many reasons and is determined to fulfill every single one of them.

GRANT ERHUANGA, FOUNDER & CEO OF INNOVAZING



Grant A. Erhuanga is the Founder and CEO of Innovazing with over two decades of experience as an entrepreneur as well as in the government and private sectors. He is a life architect and empowerment coach and a master trainer in sales strategy. Grant is a certified Project Management Professional, a real estate investor, and a Ph.D. Candidate at Rutgers University. He pioneered a revolutionary approach blending intuition, communication, and leadership to help business owners advance to the next level. His specialty is in training executives and business owners to lead effectively and communicate powerfully so that others listen, absorb, and apply. Top innovators and executives have engaged with Grant to optimize their relationships and maximize their leadership impact.