

Three Nonverbal Keys to Negotiating

Whether settling a contract or nailing down salary terms, successful negotiators use nonverbal techniques to increase their power and enhance their impact on the outcome. Here are three focal points that will help build your negotiating power.

The Power of Body Language

Using body language is as important as reading body language. Practice these guidelines until comfortable.

The power standing position is: feet slightly apart and planted to the floor; shoulders comfortably back; neck straight, not tilted; stomach in; and arms comfortably by your side. Also use this stance when entering a room, except walk with a comfortable stride -- not too slow and not too fast.

Posture and Stance:

- Stand or sit up straight. Don't slouch or lean against anything.
- When seated, place both feet flat on the floor, not crossed or tucked under the chair.
- Lean forward to exude energy, or lean back to appear more relaxed.
- Don't cross your arms across your chest as a defensive move.

Hands:

- Don't touch your face or cover your mouth.
- Don't touch the other party except for the handshake.
- To increase trust, keep both hands out in the open, not in your pockets or under the table.
- Do not grip your hands or clasp in the prayer position.

The Power of the Eyes

Most people show their true feelings through their eyes. To build confidence:

Do:

- Make direct eye contact with everyone involved.
- Smile comfortably with your eyes as well as your mouth.

- If possible, watch the pupils of their eyes. Pupils dilate when they see something they like.

Don't:

- Stare or glare.
- Look away when someone is talking to you.
- Roll or rapidly move your eyes.
- Blink often. The more a person blinks, the less he or she is trusted.

External and Internal Power

External power is having a strong appearance. If the negotiation is on your turf, your work area is part of the external power. Internal power is having genuine confidence.

Why are these types of power so important? Because if your external appearance or internal attitude turns off the other party, you may never get them to agree with you.

To increase external power:

- Keep the negotiating environment appropriate to the situation.
- Be dressed and groomed appropriate to the situation.
- Speak slowly and clearly, and project with a strong full voice. The other party must be able to hear and understand you before you can get what you want.
- Lower your voice tone to avoid a weak, high-pitched tone.
- Be courteous.

To increase internal power:

- Practice a mock negotiation several times. Practice is the best-kept secret of great negotiators.
- Be thoroughly prepared. Know what you want and what you will give. Predict what the other party will want and will be willing to give.
- Have everything you need with you to keep from getting flustered.
- Truly believe in yourself.