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5 tips to improve first impressions.

It begins even before you say your first word at an appointment with a prospect. By the time your potential advertiser walks toward you, an opinion is already being formed. There you sit waiting to spew out your presentation of the features and benefits of your radio station and to answer the objections you have prepared for, all the while you are already being judged by your appearance, posture, smile and / or nervous look.

I am sure you have all heard the expression that “80% of all communication is non-verbal”.

Well a study done at UCLA a few years ago revealed that the total impression of a presentation was based on 7 percent of the words used, 38 percent on voice quality and 55 percent on nonverbal communication.

Look back at speakers or salespeople you've listened to. Which ones stand out as memorable? The ones who were more dynamic and entertaining or the ones who just gave out information?

This is not to say you have to amuse your prospect (no jokes, please), but it does mean the dialogue should be more interactive. If you say you are eager about the prospect of working with your prospect's company but don't show any enthusiasm, your message will probably fail.

So smile, gesture once in a while, show some liveliness and make the encounter more pleasurable for both of you.

Body Language Vulnerabilities to be aware of:

1. **The handshake:** It's your first encounter with the prospect – even if it is not. If your prospect holds out their hand and receives a limp, damp hand in return (often referred to as the wet fish), it is not a very good beginning. Your handshake should be firm, not bone-crushing, and your hand should be dry and warm. Try running cold water on your hands when you first arrive at the prospects place of business. Run warm water if your hands tend to be cold. The insides of your wrists are especially sensitive to temperature control.

2. **Your bearing:** Stand and sit erect. We're not talking "psychopathic" posture, but show some energy and enthusiasm. A slouching posture looks tired and uncaring. Check yourself out in a mirror or on videotape.



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3. Eye contact: Look your prospect in the eye. You don't want to stare, as this shows aggression. Occasionally, and nonchalantly, glance at your prospect's hand as he or she is speaking. By constantly looking around the room while you are talking, you convey a lack of confidence or discomfort with what is being discussed.

4. Your hands: Gesturing or talking with your hands is very natural. Getting carried away with hand gestures can be distracting. Also, avoid touching your mouth while talking. Watch yourself in a mirror while talking on the phone. Chances are you are probably using some of the same gestures in a business meeting.

5. Don't fidget: There is nothing worse than someone playing with his or her hair, clicking a pen, tapping a foot or unconsciously touching parts of the body. Preparing what you have to say is essential, but practicing how you will say it is imperative. The nonverbal message can speak louder than the verbal message you are sending.