

## Buying Signs

By Kim Dannies

I recently had the pleasure of experiencing the “Bill Acheson phenomena” in Toronto. Bill, an expert in nonverbal communication, is drop—dead funny and the most polished speaker I have ever seen. Since 1985 he has enthralled University of Pittsburgh students and business professionals alike with keen and witty insights about the mysteries of non—verbal communication and the secret language of selling. As our keynote speaker, Bill shared his vast knowledge of body language and taught us how to project ourselves with greater impact. We also learned to decode some of the subconscious messages sent by others. Bottom line: communication is 1/3 what you say, 1/3 how you say it, and 1/3 how you appear while saying it.

### Did you know?

- It takes only 1/24th of a second to create a first impression at the subconscious level. At three seconds that first impression is established and unlikely to undergo further significant change.
- When a man nods his head in a sales situation it means: “yes.” When a woman nods her head in the same exact situation, it means absolutely nothing.
- Smell is an important nonverbal indicator. Most women perceive a man who uses too much cologne or aftershave as untrustworthy.
- The bigger the lie the easier it is to detect through non—verbal communication. It is harder to lie to a member of the opposite sex or to someone you perceive is more attractive than you are.
- Rapport building teaches people how to approach prospects, especially the differences in approaching men and women. There are six styles of handshakes and ways to differentiate both conscious and subconscious non-verbal cues. The subconscious signals are far richer in message value. When you shake hands with someone, for instance, you provide a firm grip, smile, and establish eye contact. These are conscious signals. But a subconscious cue, the non-shaking hand, is often the best indicator of attitude and intent on the part of the other person.

- Non-verbal messages in first meetings are as much as ten times more powerful than words in establishing personality. Even simple behaviors have strong impacts. For example, to establish rapport when meeting others, remember to approach women “head on,” but to approach men from a slight angle.

Listening skills are equally critical in building rapport and are good non-verbal indicators of successful business communication. Do you know if your prospects are listening to your message? Do they believe you are responsive to their message? To find out, there are books such as Dale G. Leathers’ classic *Successful Nonverbal Communication* but for something a bit less pedantic, try *The Power of Non-Verbal Communication: What You Do Is More Important Than What You Say* by Henry H. Calero.

Professionals from 3M, American Express, AIG, Bank of America, Citigroup, Ernst & Young, Fidelity Investments, Finance America, Merrill Lynch, MorganStanley, Nationwide, SmithBarney, and Van Kampen Investments are already using Bill’s selling insights—check him out at [www.keynotesusa.com](http://www.keynotesusa.com)

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