



Your Face Gave You Away



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One of our company’s salesmen was concerned that he wasn’t closing enough business and asked me to spend a day with him working on sales techniques. I believe in learning by example, and that day I showed him how a tough customer could be won with some simple posturing.

On one of our sales calls, I noticed the receptionist had a great smile so I matched her grin. Between phone calls I asked about her background. She soon felt comfortable, as we both sounded and appeared trustworthy, and shared with us that the owner was the decision-maker. She also advised that he didn’t accept appointments, which is why we were there, but leaned forward and whispered to me that he was out in the shop right now. Pointing to a door in the next building she continued, “and good luck!”

As we approached the door, the salesman fell in line behind me, not believing that I was just going to walk in unannounced. As we strolled into the middle of the building, a man started marching towards us from the back. His stride was authoritative and pronounced; he had a stern, forbidding look on his face. I matched his actions as best I could. I stood taller with my shoulders back, trying to look even more menacing. His

pace slackened, his facade softened, he became inquisitive, and he talked to us.

These actions are an example of how body language can be used to neutralize a dominant prospect by using neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), a complicated term for things like smiling and standing up straight. According to Albert Mehrabian, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, UCLA, when communicating emotions, body language is more than half of the interaction.

Here are the four examples of ways body language relates to behavioral styles:

“By matching his body language, I was able to imply to him that I was the bigger lion”

Dominant – The prospect in the opening illustration had a dominant behavioral style, characterized by an **intimidating face**. While he may not be a naturally irksome person, his need to solve problems and seek challenges to achieve results tends to be expressed through an aggressive, irritated countenance. By matching his body language, I was able to imply to him that I was the bigger lion, resulting in having him back down and engage. We were able to build trust, identify and solve issues that he was having with his current supplier, and — we gained the business.

Influential – Influencers are all

about making contact with people. They network through enthusiastic interactions and are easy to identify by their **smile**. The receptionist in our opening case was an influencer. To connect with her I simply grinned and allowed her to carry the conversation by asking questions. She wanted to tell me what I wanted to know. Without prompting, influencers will tell you about their needs. Be careful, however. Influencers like to talk and tend to get sidetracked.

Steady – You can distinguish a steady person by their **lack of emotional facial expression**. While they have a deep emotional reservoir, they don’t show it. Match their slower pace, vocal tempo, tonality, and consistency to make them feel comfortable. These golden-retrievers like to help you solve their problems. Approach them with a friendly, “How can I help you?”

Compliant – These conscientious beavers are afraid of making mistakes. Their desire for procedure in a constant manner is identifiable by a fearful facial expression. By matching their slower vocal pace and tonality, they will comfortably ask for product details. Give them the specifications and leave them alone to make their decision. If they quiz you on the data, be sure to find the answer.

Being able to successfully read people and help them find solutions to their problems isn’t difficult. We all desire a friendly, trusting encounter, especially when meeting new people. The next time your customer comments that you made him feel comfortable and seemed to identify his needs quickly, simply say, “Your face gave you away.” **SW**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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