

Phoenix Leadership Experience

Power Through Presence



- It takes 7 seconds to make 11 impressions, and just 5 minutes to make those lasting impressions hard to reverse
- 93% of the way we communicate is nonverbal through body language/our voice
- Nonverbal communication skills are a crucial part of developing positive professional relationships, bonding with colleagues, communicating to influence and contribute to leadership presence

Here are some unintentional traps to avoid:

Your Head

Upspeaking Letting your voice rise at the end of a sentence – which makes your statement sound like a question.

Avoid the trap: When making a declarative statement, be sure to use the authoritative arc in which your voice starts at one note, rises in pitch through the sentence, and drops back down at the end.

Head tilts Using too many head tilts. Head tilting is a signal that someone is listening and involved – and a particularly feminine gesture. As such, head tilts can be very positive cues, but they are also subconsciously processed as submission signals.

Avoid the trap: Use head tilts when you want to demonstrate your concern for and interest in members of your team, or when you want to encourage people to expand on what they are saying. But when you need to project power and authority, you should keep your head straight up in a more neutral position.

Nodding too much When a man nods, it means he agrees. When a woman nods, it means she agrees – or is listening to, empathizing with, or encouraging the speaker to continue. In fact, women tend to nod so much we've been accused of looking like bobble-head dolls.

Avoid the trap: Constant head nodding can express encouragement and engagement, but not authority and power. To project authority, especially when stating your opinion, keep your head still.

Smiling excessively Excessive or inappropriate smiling can be confusing and a credibility robber. This is especially noticeable if you over-smile while discussing a sensitive subject, expressing anger, or giving negative feedback.

Avoid the trap: Smiling can be one of the most powerful and positive nonverbal cues, and especially potent for signaling empathy and warmth. But when the subject turns serious, you need to look serious.

Your Body

Physically condensing Women tend to contract their bodies, keeping elbows tucked in close to their sides, tightly crossing legs, stacking materials in small, neat piles – as if they are trying to take up as little space as possible.

Avoid the trap: Remember that status, power and confidence are nonverbally demonstrated through the use of height and space. When you sit in a manner that makes you look smaller, it also minimizes your look of authority. When you sit up straight, claim space by hooking an arm over the back of your chair and spread out your belongings, you appear to be more assured. Likewise, widening your stance when standing, relaxing your knees and centering your weight in your lower body gives you a “solid” and confident look.

Having a delicate handshake Even more than their male counterparts, women with weak handshakes are judged to be passive and less confident.

Avoid the trap: Take the time to cultivate your “professional shake.” Keep your body squared off to the other person – facing him or her fully. Make sure you have palm-to-palm contact and that the web of your hand (the skin between your thumb and first finger) touches the web of the other person's. Look your partner in the eyes, smile – this is one place where a smile is a business asset – and start to speak: “So good to meet you...” or whatever, before you release your hand. Most of all, remember to shake hands firmly.

Slouching Posture

Avoid the trap: Adopt your power pose. A straight, neutral position. Is your posture grounded and vertical?

Distracting Dress/Makeup If it distracts, it detracts.

Avoid the trap: Make sure your appearance doesn't undermine your personal message. Observe and dress similarly to leaders who are a couple levels up- it will be easier for others to imagine you in that role.