

# **The importance of non-verbal communication in business**

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Bachelor Thesis  
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**Tomas Bata University in Zlín**  
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**Tomas Bata University in Zlin**  
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Hargie, Owen. *The Handbook of Communication Skills*. Routledge, 2 edition 1996.

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Nierenberg, Gerard. *How to Read a Person Like a Book*. Pocket, 1990.

Thill, John. *Excellence in Business Communication*. Prentice Hall, 7<sup>th</sup> edition 2006.

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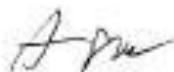
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## **ABSTRAKT**

Teoretická část mojí práce pojednává o neverbální komunikaci a definuje ji jako nejdůležitější formu komunikace. Tato práce také demonstruje způsoby neverbální komunikace nutné pro dosažení úspěchu v jednání, obchodních schůzkách, veřejných projevech a pracovních pohovorech. Praktická část práce je pak zaměřena na výzkum, jímž byla dokázána důležitost nonverbální komunikace v obchodním jednání. Výsledky výzkumu jsou zpracovány na základě písemných dotazníků a osobních pohovorů z třiceti různých firem. Cílem této práce je identifikace kritérií úspěšné neverbální komunikace a také zpracování forem obranné neverbální komunikace v nestandardních podmínkách (např. při potlačení emocí a při komunikaci v nepříjemných situacích)

Klíčová slova: nonverbální komunikace, obchod, obchodní komunikace

## **ABSTRACT**

In theoretical part, non-verbal communication is defined as the most important form of communication. With my research I verify the importance of non verbal communication in business and demonstrate how to get the best from it for successful negotiations, business meetings, and public speaking and job interviews. Practical part is done by administering written questionnaires, using e-mail questionnaires as well as personal interviews

(face-to-face) among thirty different companies. The aim of this research is to identify the criteria that successful business people must have in order to win a contract or sale and how they can modify and hide their real emotions or reactions in an unpleasant or contradictory situation by different gestures of non verbal communication.

Keywords: non-verbal communication, business, business communication

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of my bachelor thesis is to show the importance of non-verbal communication in business and how to use this type of communication properly.

To become a successful person in business requires much more than good speech. Verbal communication represents just a small percentage of winning the sale and dealing with clients in business. The rest is to have adequate non-verbal skills and to know how and when to use them properly. More than voice or even words, non-verbal communication actually takes people in to what is on other people's minds. Sometimes although our voice and words are under control, our body language, including the tiniest facial expressions, movements and gestures can give our true thoughts and feelings about something.

Therefore, it is very important to control our non verbal gestures for carrying out productive, fruitful business. Non-verbal communication is the most powerful form of communication and in order to explain this I will show the main parts of non-verbal communication and the messages they represent. Messages are represented by our body posture, body gestures, facial expressions or pauses.

Non-verbal communication helps us to express ourselves better. In business meetings even before a word is said, the receiver, the opposite side, observes the body gestures and facial expressions of the speaker, with the purpose of trying to make sense of all these symbolic messages.

With the practical part I want to show companies' behavior and to find out the non-verbal tactics of successful speakers. With this research I have identified the criteria that successful business people must have in order to win a contract or sale and how they can modify and hide their real emotions or reactions in an unpleasant or contradictory situation by different gestures of non-verbal communication.

Knowing the skills and tips of non-verbal communication should also help us with presenting our skills for a certain job. With this we can put our strengths in the first plan, hide our weaknesses, and show that we are serious.

## **I. THEORY**

# 1 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

*“The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said.”* (Drucker, 2005)

In the year 1999, British comedian Eddie Izzard stood on stage in San Francisco and commented on national anthem. Although he was just going for a laugh, his routine was based in truth. He was telling that actually even if a person is lost in the middle of song, it does not matter if he/she singing it with the usage of the right words or not. It's important to figure out how to make it look like singing it correctly because *“All that people care about is the look.”* (Izzard, 1999)

## 1.1 Definition of the term

According to A. Barbour, author of the book: „Louder Than Words: Nonverbal Communication” the total importance of a message is represented like this:

- 7 per cent verbal (words)
- 38 per cent vocal (volume, pitch, rhythm, etc.)
- 55 percent body movements and facial expressions

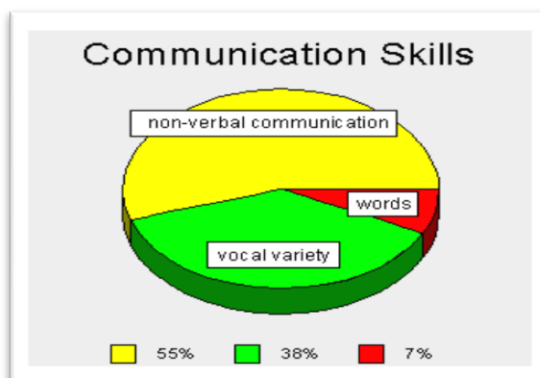


Figure 1 'The importance of Non-verbal communication' (Non-verbal communication, 2009)

The conclusion of Eddie's performance is that if a person is on the stage, he/she must make sure to look good; to open mouth big enough, to react with the eyes and to keep confirming and denying things with the head movements. This is the way for successful performance.

All of this shows us that communication, as one of the basic needs of human existence, is not just about verbal communication. It represents much more than a language

and using vocalization. In fact communication can be expressed non-verbally, independent of a formal language.

According to best known body language experts, non-verbal communication is understood as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages. (Hargie, 2006)

### 1.1.1 Understanding of non-verbal messages

All messages can be communicated and understood through gestures; body language or posture; facial expression, eye contact; or through objects of communication as dress code, hairstyles and smells.

Non-verbal communication is giving an opportunity to go in other person's mind. If the person wants to mask his/her own feelings or immediate reaction to some kind of information, the special attention should be given to non-verbal behavior.

In order to stress the importance of non-verbal communication, people should consider what actually happens when there is 'conflict' between verbal and non-verbal messages that have to be sent to receiver. The receiver will mostly accept non-verbal message over the verbal one. This human behavior is connected with an old gold phrase: "*Actions speak louder than words!*" (Twain, 2010)

Non-verbal communication represents huge area of human behavior with a lot of elements to be analyzed. Sometimes even when our voice and words are under control, our body language can tell something different, including the tiniest facial expressions and movements which show our real thoughts and feelings at the moment.

*"The silent signals of non-verbal communication tend to reveal underlying motives and emotions—fear, honesty, joy, indecision, frustration—and much more. The tiniest gestures, like the way your co-workers stand or enter a room, often speak volumes about their confidence, self-worth, and credibility. And the way you sit, stand, or look at others reveals more about your true intent than you may realize."* (Kinsey, The Non-verbal Advantage 2008)

Non-verbal communication is the most powerful form of communication and it's very important to know how to use it correctly. There are many forms and tips for learning and improving personal non-verbal skills. Correct interpretation and usage of already learned skills can help achieving goals on current or future work position.

## 1.2 Categorization

In his third edition, 2006, The handbook of communication skills, Owen Hargie is explaining about few dimensions which describe the major categories of non-verbal behavior research. The first category is: kinesics or commonly referred 'body language'. It includes movements of the hands, arms, head, legs, postural shifts, gestures, eye movements and facial expressions.

A second category is represented by paralanguage and its defined "as content-free vocalization and patterns associated with speech such as voice pitch, volume, frequency, shuttering, filled pauses(for example 'ah'), silent pauses and number of words spoken in a given unit of time. Then there is a third category which involves physical contact in the form of touching. A fourth group represents proxemics (involves interpersonal spacing and norms of territoriality) and the fifth group is related to physical characteristics.

Physical characteristics are in the group that contains clothes artifacts and adornments such as dress code, perfume and jewelry. The last group that he spoke about is the group with environmental factors. This group deals with the influences of the physical setting in which behavior occurs: an office, or classroom... (Hargie, 2006, 91)

As the non-verbal communication represents a whole science by itself and it consists of large number of elements I will be concentrating on the most powerful elements of it and the ones which are the most important in business.

## 1.3 Body Posture

*"Body talk was stronger during negotiating than the rival's words; non-verbal communication spoke volumes to viewers."* (Keen, 2004)

Body posture is representing a person. Every posture has its own story and person who wants to enter in a business successfully must have position of a body that tells a story-

A powerful nonverbal story.

Your audience will react on your message accordingly to this. It will reflect your underlying state of mind whether you are feeling confident, submissive, and optimistic or depressed. (Hopkins, 2009)

Good posture means standing upright with shoulders straight; slightly head up with eyes facing the front. Exactly that strong, upright positive body posture helps person not just to breathe easily but also gives a person dose of authority, confidence, trust and posture (Hopkins, 2004)

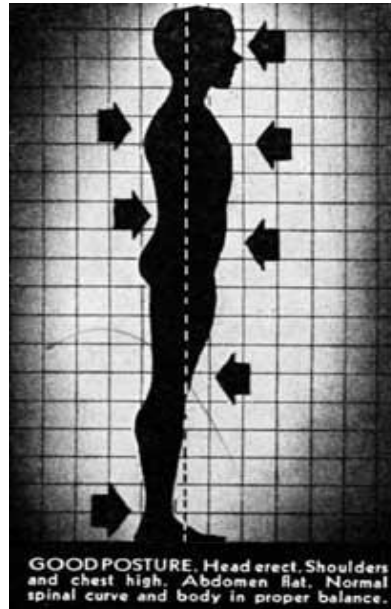


Figure 2 'Good body posture' (Body habits, Walden, 2008)

We can conclude that posture may show how a person will approach a situation. For example, if a person stands with shoulders hanging, and with arms folded, it will look as not being ready for a topic or interested in the certain task in question. But if a person stands with strong shoulders, with head up, arms out by the side, it will send positive signals and show that is ready for anything no matter how much stress is involved in the topic.

## 1.4 The power of smile and eye contact

*„A natural smile produces characteristic wrinkles around the eyes-insincere people smile only with their mouth“* (Pease, 2004, 67)

Smiling is universally considered to be a signal that shows a person is happy. But recent researches have shown that smiling serves much deeper purpose.

Some people are using smile when they are nervous, excited, interested, when they are about to cry or when they want to show that they are powerful and dominant in certain situations.

An apology with a smile incurs a lesser penalty than an apology without smile. The remarkable thing is that when a smile is given to someone, it causes the reaction from the other side, by returning the smile, even when both sides are using fake smiles. In the other words, whether we realize it or not, we automatically copy the facial expressions we see. (Pease, 2004, 70)

Smiling has a big importance for our body language repertoire especially in business because smiling can directly influence people and their attitudes. It also affects how other people will respond to you. Positive reaction in business sphere is always ‘more than welcome’ and smile is the key for that.

*„Positive sphere in business communication is more than welcome, smile is the key for that! “* (Pease, 2004, 70)

Learning how to smile properly and to not look as a fake is a procedure of learning and it takes time and practice to learn how to control facial emotions. Kevin Machleit, professor of marketing at the University of Cincinnati’s College of Business Administration, found that adding humor to your business speech and advertisements will increase sales. She found that humor makes it more likely that consumers will accept advertisement or any product on sale if a person adds humor to a strict business atmosphere. (Pease, 2004, 85)

All body language experts are advising to smile slowly and to smile for real. The best thing is practicing in front of the mirror till we feel comfortable enough to share it among the people. Our smile represents the best weapon for making customers and business people around us to feel comfortable and appreciated.

## **1.5 Eye contact**

Eye contact regulates conversation, gives cues of dominance or forms the basis for suspecting a liar. Eye signals represent important part of facial expressions and give us the power to understand other people’s attitude and read their thoughts. (Pease, 2004, 165)

According to Allan Pease and his book ‘The definite book of Body Language‘ The eyes can be the most revealing and accurate of all human communication signals because they

represent a focal point on the body and pupil are working independently of conscious control.

Scientists concluded that eye contact represents one of the strongest tools in Business communication. It's the powerful tool that connects us to the other people. And in Business world connections are everything.

Bill Graham in his book 'How to sell yourself' said that good eye contact is not easy to label. It doesn't give us the same feeling, and with every other person works differently. Each eye contact, no matter negative or positive represents powerful impact on others. With watching people into their eyes people can feel different emotions and energy that person sends. Anger, sadness, happiness, warmth, joy, and love -- all powerful emotions are visible from eye contact. The sender mostly knows what kind of energy was sent.

Good eye contact can make more than a good impression. In fact, eye contact can help the other person like you, trust you, remember you, and want to enter into business plans with you. Eye contact can show is a person comfortable in its own skin, is it interested in something, is it honest or confident. People who have difficulties with eye contact usually have problems with the clients and surrounding and it immediately has a negative influence on business. (Graham, 2009)

## 1.6 Gaze behavior

In their book "The definite book of Body Language", Allan and Barbara Pease were discussing about gaze behavior. They said that real base for communication can be established only when you see 'eye to eye' with another person. Some people can make us comfortable when they talk with us, some seem untrustworthy. Initially, this depends on the length of time that people look at us and how long they hold their gaze during the speech. (Pease, 2004, 175)

The professor of social psychology and non-verbal communication in Britain, Michael Argyle recorded that average gaze length to be 2.95 seconds and the length of a mutual gaze should be around 1.18 seconds. Also he found the notable exception in a culture. In Japan and some Asian and South American cultures this rule doesn't count because extended eye contact is considered as aggressive and disrespectful. In most cultures to build a good rapport with another person, gaze should be about 60 or 70% of



the time. These causes to people remember you enough and start to like you. In the other hand,

the nervous, timid people who meet other person gaze less than one-third of the time is rarely trusted. But we can't forget on cultural differences, as with most gestures, the length of time that one person gazes at another can be culturally determined. (Pease, 2004, 175)

Business people usually travel a lot and they must consider cultural circumstances before they make final conclusion. According to Allan and Barbara Pease, 2004, there are three types of gazing and each of them depends on a situation we are in: Social gazing, Intimate gazing, Power gazing. For every business man or woman it's important to know the difference between them because they are very common and everybody should know how to react correctly in each kind of situation.

### 1.6.1 The social gaze

Experiments on gazing reveal that gazer's eyes look in a triangular area on the other person's face, between the eyes and the mouth for a 90 % of the gaze time. That gazing area will give a feeling to the other person that you are non-aggressive. (Pease, 2004, 182)

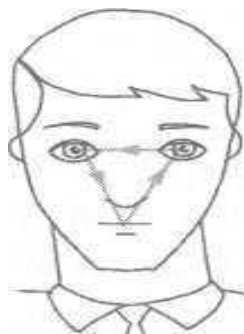


Figure 3 The social gaze 'Triangular Area' (Pease, 2004, 182)

Knowing how to use the social gaze is from a big importance for the business meetings and during the job interview because in these situations we have to show that we are interested and to show that we are open for further communication.

### 1.6.2 The intimate gaze

This gaze represents zone between eyes and below the chin to lower parts of the person's body. The intimate gaze is used among man and woman who are attracted to each other,

and those who are interested will return with the same gaze. People usually give two quick gazes. (Pease, 2004, 182)

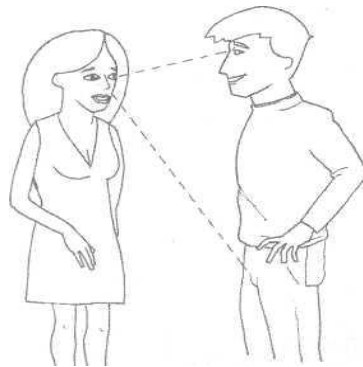


Figure 4 The intimate gaze 'First Approach' (Pease, 2004, 182)

### 1.6.3 The power gaze

It represents a look which Allan and Barbara Pease ,2004, described like his: “Imagine the person has a third eye in the center of their forehead and look in a triangular area between the person’s ‘three’ eyes.(Pease,2004,183) Keeping the gaze in this area is not considered as the friendly one. It should work on a person you don’t like or you want them make stop speaking.

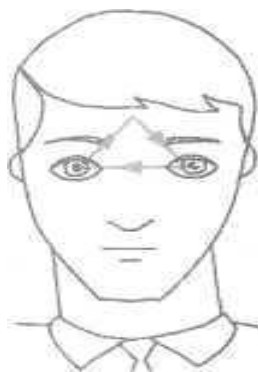


Figure 5 The power gaze 'Unfriendly' (Pease, 2004, 183)

*“Good eye contact helps your audience develop trust in you, thereby helping you and your message appears credible. Poor eye contact does exactly the opposite. So, here's*

*a useful tip: break your eye-to-eye contact down to four or five second chunks. That is, look at the other person in blocks that last four to five seconds, and then look away. That way they won't be intimidated. Practice timing yourself, away from others. Just look at a spot on the wall, count to five, and then look away. With practice, you will be able to develop a 'feel' for how long you have been look into your audience member's eyes and intuitively know when to look away and focus on another person or object." (Hopkins, 2004)*

Many people in business world tried this tactic and they agreed that its one of the bests ever.

From all of this we can conclude that the role of eye contact in business world is very important. All business people who wish to have successful business presentations and job interviews must know how to use eye contact correctly and effectively enough to leave positive impression on other.

Good eye contact means to look straight into other person eyes. But also to know for how long it should take that eye contact. From examples above, we can conclude that it shouldn't be too long to leave an impression of staring at someone, but also not too short to leave the feeling that you are not trustworthy.

#### **1.6.4 Business handshake and the power of palms**

In their book 'The definite book of Body language', 2004, Allan and Barbara Pease explained the power of using open palms. Throughout history, the open palm has been associated with honesty and truth .One of the most valuable clues to discovering is someone open and honest is to watch palm displays. (Pease, 2004, 32)

In a business world, salespeople are thought to watch for a customer's exposed palms because usually those who lie don't have exposed palms.

Most of people find it very difficult to lie with their palms exposed because of the law of cause and effect. If a person is open, they will expose their palms, but just having their palms exposed; it is difficult for the person to tell convincing lie. This is explained on a way that gestures and emotions are directly linked to each other. Open palms can help to avoid some of the false information's that other people could tell and encourage them to be more open. Pease claim that the most powerful, but also the least noticed body signal is giving by the human palm when giving someone a handshake. Palm power is connected with the power of silent authority. There are three main palm command gestures: The Palm – Up position, Palm- down and the Palm-Finger-Pointed position. The palm-up position

is understood as non-threatening gesture, connected to a street beggar gesture, and from an evolutionary perspective, shows the person holds no weapon. If we want someone to talk and expect to answer on our questions, palm up gesture is right for that. (Pease, 2004, 36-37)

If a person wants to appear more open and honest practicing open palm gestures is necessary. Sales people should know all tricks and pay special attention on this if they want to have a positive impact on their clients and win a sale.

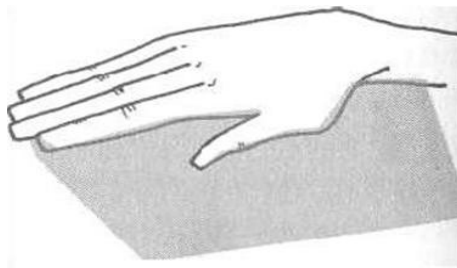


Figure 6 Palm down –‘Non-threatening’ (Pease, 2004, 37)

When the palm is turned to face downwards, person immediately project authority. The Nazi salute had the palm facing down and it was the symbol of tyranny and power during the Third Reich. (Pease, 2004, 36-37)

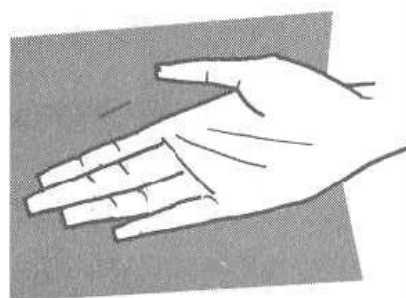


Figure 7 ‘Authority’ (Pease, 2004, 37)

The Palm-Closed- Finger –Pointed is a position in which a pointed finger is used like a symbol of negative feelings in others because it precedes a right-over blow, a primal move used in a physical attack. It’s classified in the most annoying gestures that someone can use during the speech. In some countries such as Malaysia and the Philippines, finger pointing is considered as insult and it’s used just to point at animals. People from Malaysia are using their thumb to point to people. (Pease, 2004, 38)

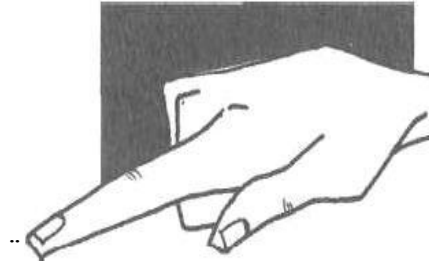


Figure 8 ‘Pointing Finger’ (Pease, 2004, 38)

To create relaxed atmosphere among the others and have a positive effect it’s important to practice the Palm-up and Palm- down positions. For the same matter and for having a success in a business world and among the clients, position ‘Pointing Finger’ should not be used. Clients and people around could make a conclusion about possible arrogance and aggressive, rude acting. Even if a person is doing it unintentionally, audience can think exactly the opposite and it will cause not-successful business meeting.

Handshake has its own very special place in business communication. Business deals are usually opened and closed with the handshake. We should have on our mind that it represents much more than a usual greeting. It’s a part of a person personality and it can show the level of confidence.

According to Jack Griffin and his book ‘How to say IT at work’, Handshake represents the one of the strongest tools in business for making a first strong impression. Although handshakes last just for a few seconds they can empower or weaken a business relationship.

The right handshake is a key to commercial success, a kind of universal, all-purpose open sesame. Griffin is pointing that all people should know how to deliver a hearty handshake that conveys straightforward warmth, openness and a willingness to communicate . (Griffin, 1998, 21)

*“The handshake is one of the most direct statements of one’s self-image and how one wants to be perceived. Learning how to communicate through a handshake should be considered acquisition of a necessary skill. It would also be worthwhile to learn how business persons respond to other genders and their handshake styles.”* (Wesson, 1992)

There are many researches and approaches to the handshake and its importance in non-verbal communication. Some of them are really basic and they discuss some of the

main characteristics and meanings of handshakes, giving the special attention to gender and cultural differences.

### **1.6.5 The handshake and cultural differences**

Because of the diversity of cultures, system of communication may not be the same in every country where the business meetings are hold. The biggest diversity that certain country can have is the rule about the physical contact. Every country has its own nature when it comes to physical contact.

*“Physical contact may be condoned or prohibited between members of the same gender, and/or condoned or prohibited between parties of opposite gender. There may be subcultures or separated parts of a nation which do not use the handshake. In any event, the response one gets to an offer of a handshake may be the first clue one gets as to with whom one is dealing in terms of awareness of contemporary business practice.”* (Wesson, 1992)

In most Western and European countries today handshake is performed as initial greeting and as a departure greeting in all business contexts, and adopted by both women and men. As the biggest glad-handlers are the French people who are considered as people who are spending a considerable time each day shaking hands. But its known that in some countries, shaking hands with a woman is still an uncertain practice (for example, in many Muslim countries it is considered rude to do so, instead they are doing the small head-nod and that is considered as only acceptable) . (Pease, 2004, 41-42)

Cultural differences must be familiar to each person involved in business. Mistakes shouldn't be made if a person wants to win a sale, be respected by the clients and get an invitation for the next meeting in that country.

### **1.6.6 The handshake and gender differences**

Many studies identified gender differences. Males are considered as the ones with the stronger handshakes than women.

In his ‘How to say It at work’ book, 1998, Jack Griffin said that many man automatically offer women a delicate, gentle handshake. So in the business context, an excessively soft handshake can be perceived as chauvinistic and patronizing. To avoid

that, Griffin advice is to use the same, moderately firm grip they would usually deliver to another man. (Griffin, 1998, 22)

But men are not the only one who are giving the soft handshake to woman, some woman will do it also and give them a soft handshake in order to empower submissiveness and to highlight their femininity or to show that domination of her may be possible. In a business world this approach can be really bad for a woman because men can give attention to those feminine qualities and not take that woman seriously for business deals. In another hand, this doesn't have to mean that a woman in business needs to act in a masculine way. It should just give her a direction if is she wants equal credibility with her business partners.

But in 2011, William Chaplin, at the University of Alabama, have made a research about handshakes and found that extroverted types use a firm handshakes while shy, neurotic personalities don't. Chaplin also found that woman who is into new ideas used firm handshakes. Men used almost the same handshakes whether they were open to new ideas

or not. It makes good sense for woman to practice firmer handshakes particularly with men. (Pease, 2004, 44)

From all of this we can conclude that if a woman wants to leave an impression in business world and show that she is liberal and interested in new ideas she should have open, firm handshake.

### 1.6.7 The Universal handshake

Although every country has its own greeting rules, some of them are universal and they work no matter where we are. So what is a good handshake and what to avoid?



Figure 9 'Dead fish handshake' (Non-verbal World, 2010)



Figure 10 'Bone crusher handshake' (Information Nation, 2005)

In his book 'How to say It at work', Griffin explained how to avoid basic handshake problems. The limp, 'dead-fish' handshake is never welcome and it is always a big disappointment. If a person fails to give that pleasant, firm grip, it will be communication with failure from its own beginning. He clarified that the only thing that can be more offensive than the dead-fish grip is the so called 'bone crusher'. Person should definitely give up the painfully childish idea of trying to dominate the other person with showing the manual strength. (Griffin, 1998, 26)

With their handshakes people are sending their message to another person but at the same time they are learning from the opposite side. For better understanding through handshakes takes some preparation and practice.



Figure 11 'Good, firm, 10/10 handshake' (Job searching blob, 2008)

Most of people are aware that the first few minutes of the meeting can make or break the business relationship. So, the important thing is to practice handshake styles with friends and colleagues and on that way learn quickly and deliver a positive handshake every time. If a person held palms vertical and match the other person's grip, it's usually perceived as a 10/10 handshake. (Pease, 2004, 65)



## 1.7 Arm gestures

A person can show a lot of with an arm gestures. Just as the Roger Axtell told in his book “Gestures”, there are many purposes of using arm signal. For example, politicians raise the arms to incite a crowd; religious followers use them to praise a divine spirit and an audience by raising their hands and applause. (Roger, 1998, 82)

But using arms signals are not just connected with this freely and enthusiastic emotions, it has many other interpretations and usage of arms is much more vided than these basic gestures. The most common ones in Business situations are ‘Arm crossings’. With these gesticulations a lot can be said, even when a person doesn’t want to speak.

Furth more, according to Allan and Barbara Pease and their book “The definite book of body language” Arm signals can be defined also as the barrier signals. Hiding behind a barrier is a normal response that person learned in an early age to protect itself. But with the growing up, arm crossing gestures can reach the point where a person is trying to make it less obvious to others. With holding one or both arms across the chest, immediately a barrier for others is formed and its unconscious attempt to block out what is considered as a threat or undesirable circumstances. (Pease, 2004, 91)

In 1989, in the United States there was a research about Crossed Arms gesture and the results were worrying. Tests were given to 1500 delegates during the 6 different presentations. Test reveal that; when a listener has his arms crossed, he has negative thoughts about the speaker but also a listener is paying a less attention to what’s being said. (Pease, 2004, 92)

What is certain is that arm holding on chest shows that a person has defensive and mostly negative attitude to the things that are coming from the opposite side. Every good speaker should know the tactics and how to deal with those kinds of situations because without positive reactions and attitude from listeners there is no positive result.

### 1.7.1 Crossed-Arms-on-Chest

It is one of the most common arm gestures. When both are folded across the chest, it represents an attempt to put a barrier between a person and someone or something that person doesn’t like. It represents the universal gesture and it has defensive and negative meaning everywhere. People are using this gesture anywhere they feel insecure or uncertain. If somebody is having a meeting or presentation and in audience there are people with arm-crossed position, it’s understandable that they heard from you something which they disagree. (Pease, 2004, 94)



Figure 12 'Crossed –Arms-on Chest': (Pease, 2004, 93)

*“More often than not, buyers have hidden objections that more sales people never discover because they missed seeing the buyer’s arms-folded cluster, signaling that he was feeling negative about something.”* (Pease, 2004, 94)

Every speaker on business meeting should follow the rule of body language experts and to give the listeners something that they can hold in their hands and be occupied.

Because of that, on many business meetings it’s visible that people are holding some brochures, books or even bottles of water. Those brochures or bottles of water give the hands something to do and on this way arm crossings can be avoided and people will listen better and be more receptive to the information that is presented to them.

### **1.7.2 Arm-folding gestures and status at work**

Status at work can influence a lot on arm-folding gestures. The boss which is a superior type make his superiority by not folding his arms and in this way he is saying actually: *“I am not afraid, so I will keep my body open“*. Superior type mostly doesn’t show the slightest hint of nervousness. But on the opposite side are employees and the new people in a company, after shaking hands with the boss may take the full or partial arm-crossing positions because of their apprehensions about being surrounded with the company’s chairman. Mostly, in those positions, both sides are feeling comfortable because each gesture is signaling own status. (Pease, 2004, 97)

From most of the people who are having crossed arms it’s very possible to hear that they just feel comfortable in that position. But no matter how hard they are trying to convince others that they are just comfortable, behind that gesture is most likely

that a person wants to hide nervousness or other negative emotion. It's also important to remember that meaning of the message is in the receiver as well as in the sender. Even if something feels comfortable, it's important to think on others and how they can react on that gesture. Respecting this, business meetings and negotiations could be much more successful.

## 1.8 Hand and thumb gestures

The basic thing about hand gestures is to be aware that all of them can be differently understood in different parts of the world. As the hand gestures do not carry the same meaning across borders, it is very important to be educated about it and about restrictions of country. Some of them are seemingly harmless and accepted in a personal surrounding but somewhere else they can be viewed as offensive and people can consider you as rude, evil or even sexually insulted.

With the gestures as 'Thumbs-up', V-sign, Ok-sign people should be especially careful and try to avoid them as much as possible during the business meetings, sales and professional presentations. But there are some universal gestures that are common among all people in business world: 'On-the-one-hand', 'Hands clenched together' and 'The steeple'.

'On-the-one-hand' gesture is mostly used among people who are trying to summaries a discussion or to give a point to something.

They usually hold one hand palm up for articulation of each point and the opposing points are given on the other hand. Right-handed people are using their right hand for favored points and left-handers are using their left. Hand gestures grab people's attention and increase the impact of communication. With this, individuals retain more of the information they are hearing. As the researches show people who had seen the hand gestures had up to a third higher response when recalling the details of certain stories. With research into Hands Clenched Position, Nierenberg and Calero, negotiation experts, showed that it is also a frustration gesture used during a negotiation, signaling that a person is holding back a negative attitude. This position was taken by a person who is feeling about losing the negotiation. (Pease, 2004, 128)

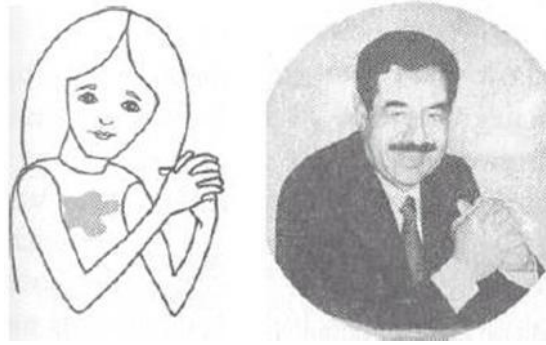


Figure 13 Showing negative and anxious attitude ‘Hands clenched together’ (Pease, 2004, 131)

‘The steeple’ gesture is often used in superior-subordinate interaction and it is connected with a confident and self –assured attitude. Most of the superiors use this gesture when they are giving advices or instructions to subordinates. It’s widely recognized among accountants, lawyers, and managers. Superior people are showing their confidence and signalize their attitude. According to Allan Pease, this gesture should be avoided when a person wants to be persuasive or win the other’s person confidence because it can sometimes be interpreted as arrogance. But if a person wants to look confident, the ‘Steeple’ position is the right one. (Pease, 2004, 134)

*„The simple act of placing the fingertips of either hand together in front of you to form a steeple is a very effective gesture that is rarely offensive and will establish you as someone who is both evaluative and in control.“ (Bixler, The Professional Image, 238)*



Figure 14 ‘The Steeple position’ (Snaps, 2011)

Although this gesture is a positive signal it can be involved in a negative circumstances or misinterpreted. In a case when salesman is giving a presentation and potential buyer is having all other positive gestures (open palms, head up, body leaning forward) with steeple position, salesman can expect positive effect and expect to get a sale. On the other hand, if the steeple position follows a series of negative gestures (arm folding, leg crossing, looking away), the buyer is signaling his confidence to not buy anything or he is trying to get rid of salesman. (Pease, 2004, 135)

The conclusion is that steeple position shows the persons attitude and confidence no matter on a result of sale. Actually, this position combined with other gestures is the key for the outcome of sale.

## **1.9 The legs and importance of their position**

Most of the people are aware of their face and after their face, they are less aware of their arms and hands, than stomach and the least part of awareness are legs. That means that legs and feet give information about someone's attitude because most of the people don't know the position of their legs, never considering to fake gestures as they are doing with their face. Most managers are using fake facial expressions and trying to control their hands but almost all are unaware of what their feet and legs were doing. Psychologist Paul Ekman discovered that people increase they lower body movements when they lie and also observers have greater success to notice when somebody is lying if they can see the entire body. This shows that many business executives feel much more comfortable when they are sitting behind a desk, where the lower parts of body are hidden. (Pease, 2004, 210-211)

Business people involved in sales, marketing and public presentations should be very careful with the way how they stand or sit because their legs can reveal when they are not telling the truth, when they are nervous or when they are stressed. Most of these movements are unconscious movements and inappropriate crossings can reveal the emotions which should be hidden.

If a person has an open, uncrossed leg position it shows an open, dominant attitude but crossed positions reveal closed attitudes or uncertainty. Each crossing the legs reveals negative or defensive emotions but also a person might appear insecure and influence on others to react accordingly. With a crossed both legs and arms it can be hard to convince somebody to listen because people in this sitting position are mostly emotionally

withdrawn from the conversation. In business, people sitting in this position, reject more proposals than those who sit with their arms and legs in an open position. (Pease, 2004, 218-219)



Figure 15 'Crossed arms and legs'-Not open to communicate (Pease, 2004, 218)

During the public speech, meeting or sale it's important to notice how clients and colleagues are sitting. On this way speaker will know the attitudes of clients and it will make it easier to find a way to involve them in conversation.

### 1.10.1 The Ankle Lock

Body scientists who were working in sales during the decades concluded that people (customers) who locked their ankles they are holding back a negative emotions, uncertainty or fear. With locked ankles during the negotiation people were holding back a valuable concession and it's important to make them unlock the ankles with a good questioning technique because people in this sitting position are mostly emotionally withdrawn from the conversation. Asking positive questions about their feelings can often get others to unlock their ankles (Pease, 2004, 222)

It is unnecessary to know that people who are involved in conversation, they also put their feet into conversation. In most of interviews, people who are nervous and who are holding back their emotions lock their ankles. Practicing and using open gesture will lead to better self-esteem and more positive perception for others especially in business where crossed legs shouldn't be exposed. It's important to make people feel comfortable and relaxed around. Understanding certain gesture, in this case leg positions, can lead to better negotiation and achieved better results in business world.

## 2 NON-VERBAL TECHNIQUES FOR A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS INTERVIEW

The employment interview is a genuine showcase for a body language and many interviewers are much more sensitive to non-verbal signals than people realize that's why communication starts even before a single word is spoken. From the entrance to the conference room or office people show powerful statement about who they are or actually who they think they are. (Griffin, 1998, 35)

*"First impressions are the 'love at first sight' of the business world."*(Pease, 2004, 349)

These are the golden keys to making great first impression:

- *The entry*: How candidate walks in the office tells to employer how candidate wants to be treated. It's important to enter without hesitation and confidently. (Pease, 2004, 352)
- It's important to practice *good posture* and stand up straight. A key part of entrance and body language strategy should be a smile. Interview represents a stressful situation and smile may not come naturally but person should not wait for feelings to change and just smile. *Smile* is important because it makes a person approachable, positive and considerate. Most of the employers will reply with a smile and it will help to ease the tension
- Start with *a strong handshake* because first few critical seconds of the interview comes with the handshake. A firm, warm grip is essential for success. While holding the other's person hand, it's important to keep the eye contact. During the conversation it's necessary to maintain the eye contact as often as possible, especially when the discussion is about important points. (Griffin, 1998, 37)
- To avoid increased anxiety and keep relaxed situation it's important to measure breathing and consciously slow down and deepen the breathing. *Relaxed energy* is also about the way person sits. It should be relaxed position but not slumped.

It's always worth to spend some time and effort for practicing how to avoid this kind of body language that shows anxiety because those are important signals for an interviewer to not hire and choose some other person. No one wants to have an employer who can't

deal with fear, nervousness and anxiety. Breaking the cycle of old habits will make a person feel better and perform more effectively in any case. (Griffin, 1998, 40-41)

The real importance of non-verbal signals during the interview is proven by Frank Bernieri of the University of Toledo who analyzed the performances of job candidates of various ages and backgrounds. He concluded that observers count the most those first 15 seconds of interview even interviews were for a 15 to 20 minutes long. That gives evidence that there is no second chance to make a first impression and that person's entrance, handshake and overall body language are the key factors for positive outcome. (Pease, 2004, 350)

All gestures which show anxiety and closeness are actually a clear way to self-destruction. Even if a person is nervous, afraid or stressed, it must learn to deal with it. There is no employer or interviewer who will react positively on signals of fear. Those signals must be controlled because no one wants to hire a person who sends messages of anxiety. A person must be in control of the feelings that projects. All habits like swinging legs, tapping a foot are the main characteristics of negative energy.

Signals of fear also can be some hand gestures. There are some hand gestures which follow the person's words and those are good for communication but there are also some meaningful, anxiety gestures that are really annoying and they have to be controlled.

## 2.1 Dress Code

*“Dress appropriately for the position you seek, not for the position your currently have”*  
(Griffin, 1998, 30)

What is also important is to know how to dress up correctly for business meetings and for an interview and how to leave a good impression on others with your dress code.

Although it's totally wrong to think that certain dress code will get a person a desired job, it's also wrong to think that we can come to certain company dressed in 'whatever'. Employers or potential candidates should always have on their mind that many companies have unspoken dress code.

The good base for every dress code is to have sharp and clean clothes. Suits for both, man and woman should be dry-cleaned immediately before interview and blouses and shirt should be freshly laundered. Those are the things that are much more important than



having brand new clothes. Perfumes and strong colognes should be avoided because employee can be annoyed or allergic on that smell. (Griffin, 1998, 49)

Most of the highly structured companies really care about their dress code and it's visible even from the entrance. A dress code represents a highly visible non-verbal sign. Some of the companies can ask their employees for a conservative business suit and some of them can give the freedom and accept the casual dress code. But what is always inappropriate and can't be accepted are: sport shoes, beach sandals and tiny T-shirts. Therefore no one can tell exactly what perfect outfit is for each company, it's important to follow the own feeling and to have clothes which is comfortable and clean. On this way people are able to express their own personality and creativity.

## 2.1 Organizational culture

*"When we learn to better understand others, we better understand ourselves."*  
(Clock, 2000)

As every company have a different culture and its own rules. It's important to know that what is acceptable for one company, it can be totally unacceptable for another one. In order to become accepted by a company it's very imported to make a little research and be familiar with rules and requests of company.

*"Every organization has a culture. Regardless of whether the culture is weak or strong, it has a powerful influence on practically every occurrence in the organization. It affects the way people dress, the working conditions, who gets promoted, and it even influences the individual's after work activities."* (Larson, 2004)

So the conclusion is that rules which apply for different companies also apply for different countries and traveling abroad. For better communication with customers and making a business deal, people have to be familiar with the culture and body language of that country.

## 2.2 Office Politics

*“First impressions are the ‘love-at-first-sight’ of the business world “(Pease, 2004, 345)*

According to Allan Pease and his book “The definite book of body language” office arrangements are mostly made in that way to show the power and status of a boss. Many people feel overwhelmed and helpless when they come to employer’s office because atmosphere in the office reminds on the lower status of employees. For that kind of atmosphere are mostly responsible strategies with chairs and seating arrangements. There exist three factors for raising status and power using chairs and those are: the size of the chair and accessories, the height and the location of the chair according to the other person. The height of the back chair can raise or lower person’s status. With the higher back of the chair go the bigger power and it’s perceived that the status of the person is immediately higher. The good example for that are kings and queens which their official chair can be high almost 3 meters. In usual offices are mostly used the ones with armrests, wheels and those which can lean back. Mostly bosses have their chairs adjusted higher off the floor and their employees are on the sofa or chair that is low so their eyes are in the level with executive’s desk. Also, the power is higher when the chair is placed directly opposite of the employees. (Pease, 2004, 358-359)

We can conclude that it’s all about signals that person wants to send to others .In one hand some people want to have friendly, warm atmosphere with their employees and they can arrange office in that way but in the other hand some people want to make their personal space more formal and to make their status visible immediately from the entrance. On this way potential candidates and employees can get a clue about employers’ personality as well as about relationships in a company.

## **II. ANALYSIS**

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

The main concepts of this chapter are data and questionnaire method used to identify the importance of non-verbal communication.

#### **3.1 Sample and Data**

The sample of the study includes responses on questionnaire from the bank employers, professional public speakers, youth and political organizations and some PhD students of TBU who are currently dealing with business meetings and public speaking. The sample of the study contains thirty responses from the companies I have mentioned above. For this study I was administering written questionnaires, using e-mail questionnaires as well as personal interviews (face-to-face). I wanted to show how individuals are dealing with non-verbal communication in different types of business. Data contains ten fixed questions which have been used in both, questionnaires and in interviews. Interviewing has been done personally with individuals and answers were recorded by writing them down during the interview itself or immediately after it.

#### **3.2 Analysis**

The analysis has been done to identify the importance of non-verbal communication in different spheres of business and to identify the most common tactics which have been used for successful negotiations, meetings, interviewing and dealings with clients.

All questions from analyzing data have been evaluated and concluded with a brief summary. Full form of questions is visible in appendix.

#### **3.3 Evaluation**

**3.3.1 Question 1: Do you think that non-verbal communication is the most important form of communication?**

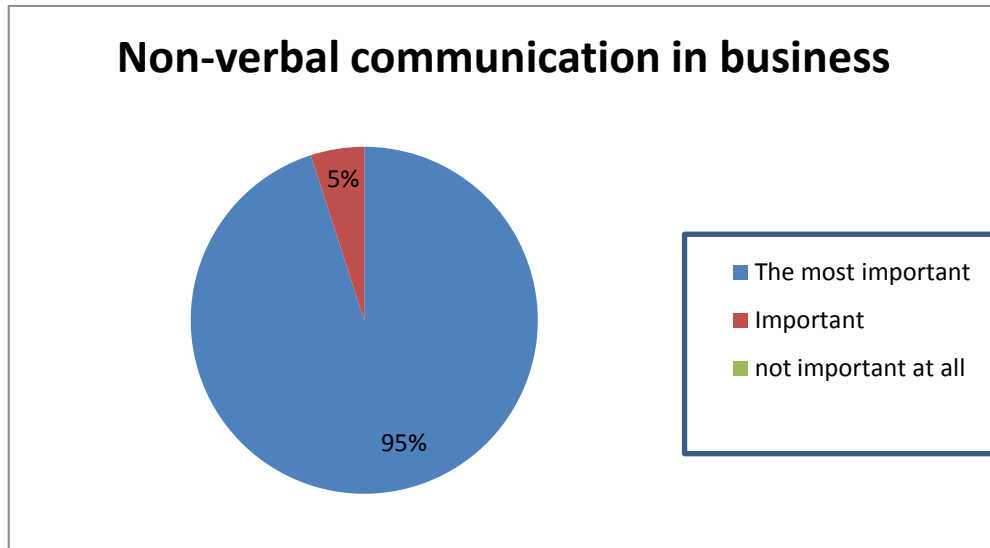


Figure 16 Non-verbal communication in business

The graph represents the answers from all people who were involved in this survey.

As it is visible 95 % of business people answered that non-verbal communication is the most important form of communication. Only 5% of the respondents said that it is important but not the most important form of communication. There were no answers which would indicate that survey participants do not consider non-verbal communication to be important. According to the answers to the first question (95%), we can conclude that non-verbal communication represents the most important form of communication.

### **3.3.2 Question 2: Do you think that learning to control our body language and facial expressions can help us dealing with clients?**

All thirty respondents had the same answer to this question. All of them consider controlling and awareness of the body language and facial expressions to be extremely important when it comes to dealing with clients. Most of the respondents also said that they are trying to use well known techniques which they have learned from body-language experts but they are also using some new things from their own experience.

### **3.3.3 Question 3: What is the first thing you notice on your clients: Facial expressions, Dress Code or something else?**

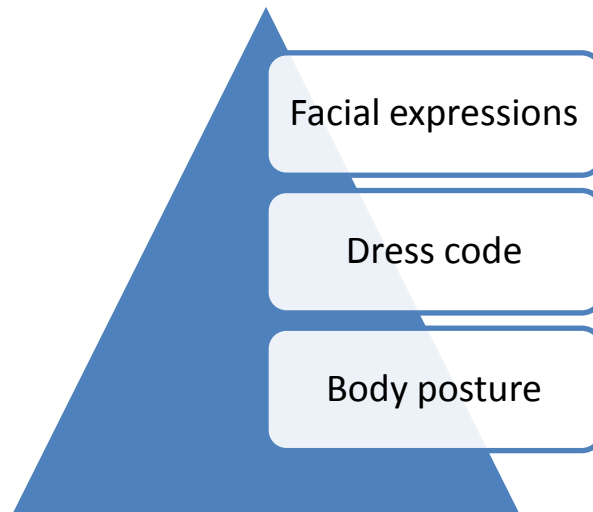


Figure 17 The most noticeable things on clients

At the bottom of a pyramid are the most effective things and every person should pay special attention on this because 80% of respondents said that these are the first and the most important things they will notice on their clients. As mentioned in chapter1, body posture sends positive signals and it can show how person will approach and act in a specific situation. The second most important thing is the dress code, which sends signals about our personality and with the answers I have got from people involved in business, I can make a conclusion that people really care about clients look and tidiness.

#### **3.3.4 Question 4: Would you fire someone who doesn't respect the dress code of a company and what are the things that you consider to be inappropriate?**

More than half of the respondents, around 65%, said that they wouldn't fire somebody because of the dress code and instead of that, they would try to make their employees to respect the rules and provide them with examples of what is considered under the rules. The other part of the respondents said that they would actually fire their employees because certain dress code can harm the image of a company. They think that first impressions count and each serious business man/woman should know that professional appearance represents the image of being able to perform adequately on the job. Looking good matters and it is a way to make your clients feel appreciated and special.

### **3.3.5 Question 5: Does body language help you to realize if somebody is lying and what is the first thing that helps you to recognize a liar?**

All respondents claim that it's very important to know how to detect lies. Seventy percent of them said that experience and everyday situations help them to recognize a lie. The rest 30% said that they are still learning and that they can't detect lies easily. According to the results of questionnaires, the most common things which can help to identify a liar are: look away or avoid making an eye contact, touching the face, nose, or playing with the papers and clothes buttons. The knowledge about detecting lies is the most useful for managers', sales people, or employers who are searching for new employees because on this way they can prevent their selves from being a victim of untruthful words and situations.

Questions with the same or very similar answers among all thirty respondents:

### **3.3.6 Question 6: When it comes to business meetings in other countries, do you learn about cultural differences and respect the rules of that country?**

### **3.3.7 Question 7: Do you appreciate strong, firm handshake and do you judge people based on that?**

### **3.3.8 Question 8: Do you think that it's necessary for a successful speaker to know how to control his emotions?**

According to respondents, learning about cultural differences is the key for acceptance and success among business companies in foreign countries. They agreed that is not always easy to learn all differences but in those kind of situations the best choice is to keep a neutral approach. All the answers to the seventh question were the same and everybody agreed that handshake does count and if it's limp it can leave a slight negative imprint on the first meeting. With their handshakes people are sending their message to another person but at the same time they can learn from the opposite side. That's why good handshakes take preparation and practice.

When it comes to emotions and nervousness during the speech, every person who has ever spoken publicly knows that it is very hard to control them. People that I interviewed think that it's important to react appropriate for the situation and the audience. They also

know that there are some situations when it is important to control your emotions and other times when it shows that you are passionate or involved in the content. But in the end, the conclusion from all respondents was that every public speaker has to perform in the best way and that means that all their emotions, no matter positive or negative, must be under the control.

### **3.3.9 Question 9: How do you control your nervousness and what is the most useful tip that you have heard/read about it?**

Every meeting or a presentation represents a challenge for a speaker. Each individual has its own style of presenting the topic but some things are in common for most of them and those are the tips that they are using to deal with nervousness. The most common tips which are shared among all respondents are:

- Note cards
- Positive thoughts
- Humor
- Practicing in front of family
- Deep breathing and relaxing exercises before presentation

These are the techniques and little tricks that all respondents are using before important speech or meeting. It is also very important to know that everybody gets anxious and it is perfectly normal to feel like that before a meeting we care about. Just knowing this, leads to positive thoughts and give us more courage and strength to perform well.

### **3.3.10 Question 10: What are the most powerful non-verbal signals for a successful interview according to you and your experience in Business? (Gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, dress code, posture, etc.?)**

*“First impressions are the ‘love at first sight’ of the business world.”* (Pease, 2004, 349)

Being prepared for the interview is the most important step in the process of hiring. That is the reason why each candidate should be prepared and leave a favorable impression with interviewers. These are the most powerful signals that candidate should pay attention on:

- Smile and warm expressions
- Dress Code



- Powerful eye contact

All thirty respondents think that without these signals, interviewer can't get a job. It's important to leave a good impression, to smile, to care about dress code and tidiness. When person is dressed professionally and have a powerful eye contact with the employee, it will be remembered and good communication will start even before a word is spoken.

### **3.4 Summary**

As I have already mentioned, the analyses and evaluation of answers have been done to identify the importance of non-verbal communication in different spheres of business and to identify the most common tactics which have been used for successful negotiations, meetings, interviewing and dealings with clients. Evaluation was based on the most common answers of employers and it shows the importance of non-verbal communication in their companies.

## CONCLUSION

Non-verbal communication is the most important form of communication and that theory has been proved by the numerous studies and researches which have been analyzed over the last couple of years. With my research I verified the importance of non verbal communication in business and demonstrated how to get the best from it for successful negotiations, business meetings, and public speaking and job interviews.

Employers in most of the companies are much more sensitive and conscious to non-verbal signals than people realize it. From the entrance to the conference room till the time the speech finishes, people with their non-verbal signals show powerful argument about which they actually are or who they think they are.

Our body language represents the best weapon for winning a sale, getting a contract or successfully dealing with clients in a business world. According to my survey, clear picture about the importance of non-verbal communication has been disclosed. With theoretical and practical part, the main objectives of my thesis were accomplished. The results which were reviewed and evaluated by questionnaire and interviews show that non-verbal communication in business is much more powerful than verbal one. To identify the importance of non-verbal communication I had to connect with the bank employers, professional public speakers, youth and political organizations and some PhD students of TBU, which gave me possibility to make research in different spheres of business and to see on which way individuals use their non-verbal skills among the clients. Above all, my survey was based on showing that non-verbal communication is extremely important for the success in business.

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## APPENDICES

P I I Questionnaire for companies: The importance of non-verbal communication

## **APPENDIX P I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMPANIES – THE IMPORTANCE OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

The main idea of this questionnaire is to identify the importance of non-verbal communication. Each company and their respondents are unique. All answers on this questionnaire reveal something about profile of a company and its own system of values. The questions are composed in that way that there is no unambiguous right answer. Some individuals answered more precisely than others but all of them have shown reactions and attitudes in the final evaluation.

1. Do you think that non- verbal communication is the most important form of communication?
2. Do you think that learning to control our body language and facial expressions can help us dealing with clients?
3. What is the first thing you notice on your clients: Facial expressions, Dress Code, or something else?
4. Would you fire someone who doesn't respect the dress code of a company and what are the things that you consider as inappropriate?
5. Does body language help you to indentify when somebody is lying and what are the first things that help you to recognize a liar?
6. When it comes to business meetings in other countries, do you learn about cultural differences and respect the rules of that country?
7. Do you appreciate strong, firm handshake and do you judge people based on that?
8. Do you think that it's necessary for any successful speaker to know how to control their emotions?
9. How do you control your nervousness and what is the most useful tip that you have heard/read about it?
10. How do you control your nervousness and what is the most useful tip that you have heard/read about it?





