

So Why Trust You?

Communication Tips for Any Presenter

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People buy your products or accept your recommendations based on trust. It's a key factor in any decision making process. Albert Mehrabian in his book, *Silent Messages*, identified three key factors that help listeners determine whether to trust you or someone else. They are verbal, vocal and visual factors.

Verbal factors relate to your message. Does your approach or recommendation make sense? Are your ideas well supported? Do they answer the listener's problems or issues? Are your points clearly expressed or filled with jargon and acronyms that only insiders understand?

Vocal factors take into consideration the voice. Does it sound confident, sincere and professional? Is it clear? Can I understand it? Is it too soft? Is it too fast? Are there lots of non-words, such as "um," "ah," "you know," "like" or "so?"

Visual factors refer to anything listeners can see with their own two eyes, such as gestures, eye contact, movement or facial expression. In essence, it is a speaker's body language. In fact, Albert Mehrabian was the first person to coin the word "body language."

Mehrabian's belief is that listeners consider all of these factors when determining trust or credibility. Thus, if a speaker wants to be trusted, the person should keep all three of these factors in sync. In other words, the body and the voice should back up the message. If you say you are thrilled with your third quarter earnings, people should see it on your face and hear it in your voice.

If the three factors are not in alignment, Mehrabian says people trust what they see with their own two eyes 55% of the time. They notice that a speaker is fidgeting, moving aimlessly or not looking at them. If the body language is not distracting, but the voice is, 38% of the time, listeners will trust what they hear in the voice. They observe when a speaker

sounds nervous. In fact, some people can tell by just one word, such as "hello," that the individual is upset. Mehrabian states unequivocally that only 7% of the time will a person consider the individual's words if the three factors are incongruent. In other words, a speaker can lose 93% of his credibility by not paying attention to his body language and his voice.

Most speakers focus on their content. In fact, they may spend days or weeks preparing their message. The reality is they must consider all three factors, not just verbal factors. By balancing verbal, vocal and visual factors, trust and believability is greatly enhanced.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.