

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal elements in communication

- ❑ Body language (face expression, gestures, posture)
- ❑ Space language (use of space in communication)
- ❑ Language of time (various values attached to time)
- ❑ Appearance (clothes, personal hygiene, accessories)
- ❑ Language of silence
- ❑ Language of objects
- ❑ Language of colours
- ❑ Paraverbal language (voice quality, vocal characteristics, vocal parameters)

Language of silence

Silence builds walls (barriers to communication)

Long period of silence = embarrassing, threatening
Using silence carefully at strategic times = effective
technique in encouraging feedback:
encourages talking, encourages revealing
feelings / attitudes
(without feedback silence is ambiguous)

Language of time

Different values attached to time :

- **nationalities, societies, cultures**

(e.g. one year different values in: Western European Christian cultures / Muslim cultures, retail trade, farming community)

- **individuals**

(different values given to proper moment of discussing business over dinner e.g. after pleasantries, at coffee)

Body language

- body language is to be considered in relation to message -

A good reader of body language:

- ❑ sharpen powers of observation + ability to decode message
- ❑ aware of possible meanings of these messages
- ❑ alert to effect of your body language on other people

Body language - examples

Orientation (position) and posture

People who want to cooperate sit / stand side by side

People in opposition position themselves head-on or opposite

Hunched shoulders and a lowered head express shyness and inferiority

Standing erect, head tilted back and hands on hips signify superiority and self-satisfaction

Body language - examples

Gestures

**Communicate information – hand raised in greeting,
‘V’ sign, clenched fist**

**Communicate emotion – hands raised to mouth in
surprise, hand-clapping**

Support speech – hand raised to interrupt speaker

**Express self-image - wide, energetic gestures with
extrovert personalities**

Language of space

Types of personal space

- a) close phase
- b) far phase

1. Intimate distance

- a) actual contact or touching – only for very close friendship, not in business
- b) up to $\frac{1}{2}$ metre – close enough to clasp hands, in a crowded lift

Language of space - continued

2. Personal distance

- a) $\frac{1}{2} \text{ m} - \frac{3}{4} \text{ m}$ – distance reserved for more than just casual friend
- b) $\frac{3}{4} \text{ m} - 1 \frac{1}{4} \text{ m}$ – limit of physical domination

3. Social distance

- a) $1 \frac{1}{4} \text{ m} - 2 \text{ m}$ – impersonal business and casual conversations
- b) $2 \text{ m} - 4 \text{ m}$ – more formal social and business relationships

Language of space - continued

4. Public distance

- a) 4m – 8m - informal gatherings e.g. manager talking to a meeting of staff
- b) 8m or more – usually for politicians and public figures