



First Impressions

All glory comes from daring to begin.

—Eugene Ware

Opening with Impact

The moment characters in a play step on-stage, an audience begins to make judgments about them based on what is seen and heard—the way they move, the way they speak and the way they interact with other characters. The same holds true for someone presenting in a professional environment. Never underestimate the power of a strong first impression.

As the old saying goes: first impressions last. The moment your communication begins, the clock is ticking and perceptions are being established, sometimes by the dozens. Remember: it is difficult, if not impossible, to overcome a bad first impression; and in business, most never get the chance.



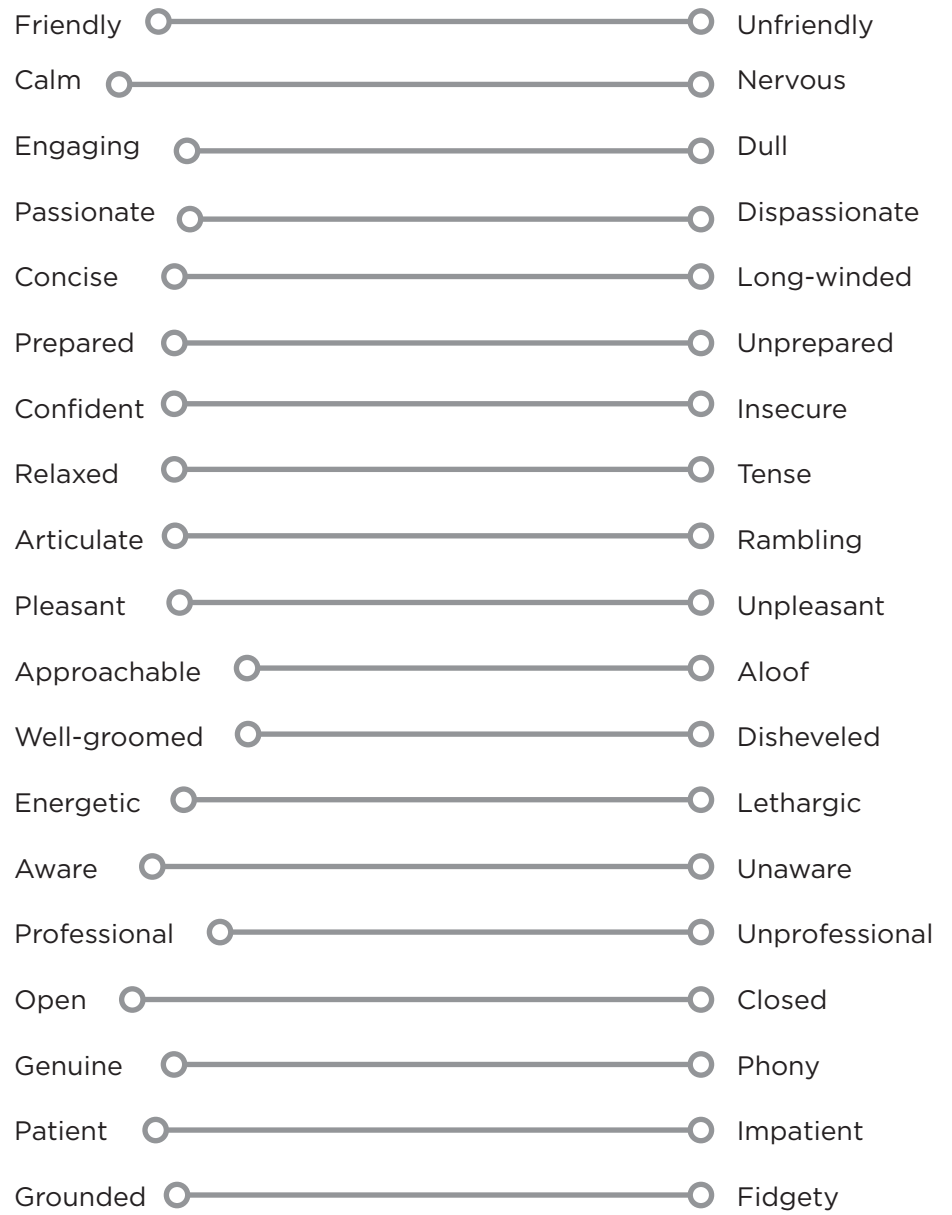
EXERCISE: Personal Introduction

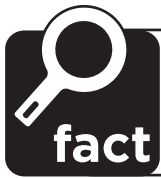
Participant observations:



According to experts, how long does it take to make a first impression?

Snap Judgements





According to experts, which gender is generally more expressive with its communication: men or women?

Five major areas of nonverbal behavior

► Eye Contact

Good, steady eye contact helps facilitate the flow of communication between a speaker and their audience. It also signals an interest in others. Furthermore, eye contact with an audience increases a speaker's credibility and allows a speaker to monitor visual feedback.

► Facial Expressions/Smiling

Your facial mask can be used to help communicate your points. You should use a wide range of facial expressions. Smiling is a powerful tool that transmits friendliness and warmth to your audience. Therefore, if you smile frequently you will be perceived as more likable, friendly, and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and your audience will react favorably.

► Gestures

If you fail to gesture while speaking you may be perceived as boring, stiff or unanimated. A lively and animated speaking style captures an audience's attention, makes your material more interesting, facilitates learning and provides a bit of entertainment. Avoid gesturing below the waist.

► Posture and Body Orientation

You communicate numerous messages by the way you walk, talk, stand and sit. Standing erect, but not rigid, and leaning slightly forward communicates to your audience that you are approachable, receptive and friendly. Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided; it communicates disinterest to your audience.

► Spatiality

How near or far you are from your audience can send a message as well. Can you move around the space during your presentation? If so, it may communicate that you are comfortable. If you stand behind a lectern for the entire presentation, it may communicate the opposite. Also, cultural norms dictate a certain distance between speaker and audience.



The Three Pillars



FACE

- Consistent eye contact
- Varied facial expressions
- Smile
- Engage eyebrows



BASE

- Proper Posture
- Effective & appropriate gestures
- Purposeful movement
- Feet planted when still



PACE

- Slow down & vary your speaking rate
- Breathe
- Eliminate verbal viruses
- Use pauses effectively

Universal Expressions

According to psychologist Paul Ekman, there are seven facial expressions used in all cultures. How many can you name?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____



According to experts, how many facial expressions is the human face capable of making?