

10 Minutes to Better Business

★ Top 9 do's and don'ts of body language in business

Date: Friday, November 12, 2010, 5:00am CST

**1. Don't fill the air with um, ah, and you know.** It is natural to pause when you speak; it gives you a chance to breathe. What's not natural is to fill the silent pause with sounds. Verbal pauses are distracting.

**2. Don't use the fig-leaf pose.** By placing your hands to cover the groin region, your body says, "I'm harmless," or, "I'm afraid."

**3. Do use hand gestures systematically.** The visual reminder created by gestures allows the listener two ways to remember: auditory and visual.

**4. Don't put your hands in your pockets.** You want to convey that you are confident in yourself and those around you.

**5. Don't hide your hands behind your back.** Depending on the situation, grasping your hands behind your back can be interpreted as, "Geez, I hope you like me," or, "You better fear me."

**6. Don't cross your arms.** This stance is most frequently understood to indicate discomfort.

**7. Do know when to put your hands on your hips.** This is a ready-to-take-action gesture. Yet, it is often given negative labels by others, such as meaning you are annoyed.

**8. Do remember the eyes have it.** Of all the nonverbal messages one can use, the eyes are the most expressive.

**9. Do stop fidgeting.** Even though fidgets can calm us, those anxious behaviors often make others uneasy.

— Sharon Saylor, "What Your Body Says"