

## Speaking Through Your Body

*Murli Mohan gives a few tips on developing positive body language during business dealings*

Only 7 per cent of communication is verbal. Body language represents 93 per cent of communication. Effective communicators make effective leaders. Hence it is mandatory for managers to develop positive body language skills in order to be more effective in your leadership roles. Unfortunately, Indian managers spend 93 per cent of their time in attending training programmes to improve their oral and written communication skills. Whereas they spend only 7 per cent of their time polishing their body language skills.



Americans spend US \$ 1 billion annually on training programmes to develop communication skills. However, 70 per cent of these budgets are spent in body language workshops.

In recent times, China has been in the forefront of conducting body language workshops and aims to train 100,000 managers in developing positive body language skills by the end of 2002. A majority of these managers are employed in export oriented units targeting US markets. Japan was one of the pioneers in this field and continued to conduct advanced research on the effect of body language synchronisation on productivity. However, the last decade has seen the Japanese move away from people oriented issues to kaizen, TQM and quality related issues.

What is positive body language? Body language is not your outward appearance, but the way you conduct yourself. One of the most important signs of positive body language is congruence. Congruence is the ability to be comfortable with oneself in attire, posture and movement. Congruence is the ability to be at ease with oneself. Congruence can be cultivated. Congruent individuals are more likely to be noticed in a group.

How can congruence be developed? Congruence can be cultivated through a simple visualisation. Just imagine your life in slow motion. Undertake every activity as if participating in a slow motion movie. Move slowly, steadily but purposefully. Avoid jerky movements as you walk. One should flow like the movement of a fine nibbed ink-pen on smooth paper. The mind and body are intricately linked. The more relaxed your mind is, the more positive is your body language. Meditation is an effective tool towards cultivating a soothing state of mind, resulting in powerful body language. Zen masters have a

permanent soothing meditative look on their faces, cultivated by years of practising meditation. Zen meditation increases anti-oxidant levels in blood, reducing free radicals, thus reducing the vagaries of aging. Zen masters in their 70s and 80s sport a youthful, radiant look on their faces, as a result of their disciplined meditative practices.

Silence is another tool to cultivate powerful body language. Attentive listening is powerful body language. Effective managers spend 80 per cent of their time listening and 20 per cent of their time talking. Breathing rates, blinking rates, eye movements, voice pitch, voice tone, voice timbre, facial gestures and body postures are a few of the components which can be improved to cultivate a positive body language.

However, care should be taken to improve one component at a time. Only long hours of practice coupled with strict supervision of qualified experts can ensure the integration of these body language skills into your daily communication patterns. Attending body language workshops is one of the ways in which you can discover the present status of your body language quotient (BLQ) and strategies to improve the same.

*(The writer is CEO, [www.tips4ceos.com](http://www.tips4ceos.com))*

