

Nonverbal Communication

What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist and poet

Understanding the importance of nonverbal communication is often difficult because it is such a natural part of any managerial interaction. To appreciate the contribution nonverbal communication makes to managerial communication, imagine yourself at a meeting with six others discussing an upcoming event—say, the opening of a new facility for your company. It is a meeting like any number you have attended before, yet it is radically different because you cannot see the others. Something keeps you from this. It could be a fabric veil, fog, wooden panels—you decide. Your location is also a puzzle. Is it the boardroom for the corporation, or is it a meeting room just anywhere? How important is this meeting in the whole scheme of things? Your environment provides no clues. In addition, you cannot really hear the others very well. All voices have been altered by the device used during investigatory reports on television. You can hear the words, but the voices have little or no character. The words are slowed down and slurred to some extent.

You are all seated in the same room, but because of the room's setup, you cannot see who is seated where—who is at the head of the table (perhaps you are), or who is at the sides, or even who is seated next to whom. While you and several others flew in to attend the meeting, you did not have a chance to shake hands before the meeting began. In fact, today you have not seen the others or what they are wearing. Are they dressed as well as you are, or are they dressed informally? The only communication possible during the meeting is what you can get from you and the six others talking.

Unfortunately, even that part of the communication process is a challenge. You verbally trip over each other as the meeting proceeds since you have no efficient way to signal whose turn it is to speak. In addition, because speakers must identify themselves before speaking, the interactions take longer than usual. Furthermore, you must keep these verbal identities in mind as you listen because you have no visual or tactile cues to go on. As the meeting progresses, whenever you contribute, you are unsure of all but the verbal reactions because you cannot see the shrugs, posture shifts, or expressions on the other faces.

The interaction is also lengthened by the need to evaluate each remark for intent. Did he mean that ironically? Was she being sarcastic? Was that last remark meant as a joke? The audio scrambler makes quick judgments on these fine points nearly impossible. And while you can hear the voices, which voice belongs to whom? Someone suggests that all the employees in the store dress up as clowns. You are just about to say “ridiculous” when you check yourself—be careful, maybe the boss said that.

You know the meeting is scheduled to last two hours, but because you had to surrender your watch at the door, you have no idea about the time, although it seems an eternity. You know the agenda for the meeting, but are you going to be able to cover all the items in the time allotted? Are you giving enough time to each item? Are you going to get out of the meeting and find that only half the time has elapsed? Whatever the case, you wish you were out of the meeting now.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Nonverbal factors are clearly a crucial element of managerial communication. Without nonverbal communication as a source of information, most of the richness and much of the meaning in messages would be lost. In many cases, conversations would be complicated by the need to repeat messages for clarity, and the time required would multiply enormously.

Nonverbal communication accompanies oral and, by logical extension, written messages, while consisting of the signals delivered through means other than verbal. In short, it includes *everything but the words*. Managers send, receive, and interpret nonverbal messages in the same way they send, receive, and interpret verbal ones. The same communication dynamics come into play as the sender intends (although often unconsciously) to send a message and chooses some medium through which to do so (a gesture, for example) that receivers perceive and interpret just as they do with verbal messages. Nonverbal communication may bear a clear meaning in

itself, but often it serves as an adjunct to the spoken words, adding nuance in one place and clarity in another. At other times, this complex source of messages may even contradict the words being spoken.

Nonverbal communication is an important part of our daily managerial interactions.¹ While the extent of the nonverbal aspect varies from interaction to interaction, one set of oft-cited statistics shows that 55 percent of a message comes from the speaker’s appearance, facial expression, and posture, while vocal aspects deliver 38 percent, and the actual words deliver only 7 percent.² Nonverbal communication is a rich and complex source of communication data, and this chapter provides an overview of the areas relevant to the managerial function. But first, three generalizations about nonverbal signals should be stressed here. While the first two apply to most other signals, it helps to keep them in mind when interpreting nonverbal communication.

STOP AND THINK

If a nonverbal message contradicts the verbal, such as when a speaker’s voice shakes and her facial expression is anxious but she says, “I’m delighted to be here!” which do you believe?

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First, with the exception of so-called emblems, nonverbal signals rarely have one set meaning. Rather, they usually add to the message's meaning, as shown in the following section of this chapter.

Second, nonverbal signals vary from culture to culture, and region to region, in their meaning. Nonverbal signals derive from experiences within the communication environment (cultural, regional, or social) and are generally dispersed throughout it.³ It is not enough merely to translate the verbal language; the nonverbal must be expressed as well.⁴ The Japanese, for example, usually present a noncontroversial demeanor and are excessively polite by North American standards. In negotiation, the accompanying nonverbals can create confusion across cultures.⁵ In cross-cultural situations, in fact, while the verbal takes on greater importance, knowing and using basic nonverbal signals—for example, bowing in South Korea—can communicate respect.⁶

Third, when nonverbal signals contradict verbal ones, the nonverbals are usually the ones to trust. When verbal and nonverbal disagree, credibility can suffer.⁷ Law enforcement agents, trial attorneys, and insurance investigators are professionals who extensively study nonverbal behavior in order to improve their interrogation skills. They know that nonverbal signals can provide valuable clues to the truth of a message.

More specifically, the law enforcement community provides a contemporary example of nonverbal behavior's importance. When attempting to identify terrorists and criminals in public places, such as airports and subways, officials are trained to "read" suspects' body language. The technique is called behavior detection and is rooted in the notion that people convey emotions, such as fear, in subconscious gestures, facial expressions, and speech patterns.⁸ Since the September 11, 2001, attack on the United States, behavior detection has been adopted by police, the Transportation Security Administration, and other authorities at over forty airports, universities, and mass transit systems.

Telling people how to dress, talk, and even move is a far easier task than putting it all into play in one's life. While we can read about the importance of smiling behavior, for example, how much is too much? Women and men aspiring to be managers can view excellent models for nonverbal behavior on business-oriented TV programs. To get the maximum impact of the nonverbal elements in the conversations, with the exception of vocal style, watch these programs with the sound turned off. Not only do they show the kinds of gestures leaders make, but they generally reflect current appropriate dress as well.

THE FUNCTIONS OF NONVERBAL CUES

Nonverbal communication is a broader concept than many realize. It is far more than just gestures and eye contact. A simple definition already offered is that in managerial interactions, nonverbal communication is everything but the words. A more precise definition is that offered by Harrison, a leading expert, who said, it is "the exchange of information through nonlinguistic signs."⁹ These nonlinguistic signs are like any kind of sign in communication in that they are something tangible, capable of bearing meaning, just as linguistic signs are. They differ in that they are nonverbal.

Even color, and how it is presented in the context of a message, can serve as a non-linguistic sign. Some studies have looked at the impact colors have on cognitive performance. Researchers at the University of British Columbia conducted tests with six hundred people to determine the effects of the colors blue and red. Red groups did better on tests of recall and attention to detail. Participants in the blue groups tested better with skills requiring imagination and creativity.¹⁰ So if your team is tasked with brainstorming for a new product or service, you may want to have them meet in a room with blue walls.

Depending on the culture, color is a nonlinguistic sign of certain emotions. For instance, Western brides generally wear white, but Eastern brides wear red. In China, white is a sign of bereavement and loss, just as black is in the United States.

A study of emotional responses to cell phone ads demonstrates how color creates different emotions in different cultures. Thirty-two people from six cultures (Finland, Sweden, Taiwan, India, China, and the United States) were asked to interpret a Nokia ad's external characteristics. The predominant blue and white colors, recognized by the Finnish respondents as their country's flag colors, provoked a positive impression. Further, the Finns found the colors "reliable," "natural," "trustworthy," and "comfortable." By contrast, the Chinese and Taiwanese respondents said that white is a funeral color for them, creating a negative impression. The Swedes recognized that blue and white are "Finnish colors" and rejected them as "boring" and "cold." The respondents from India thought the colors warm and summery. The US respondents were inconsistent about whether the blue and white colors were warm or cold, summery or wintery. Interestingly, several Americans connected the blue and white colors to "unlimited freedom" and "innovation," which no informants from other cultures mentioned.¹¹ Unfortunately, nonverbal communication can result in frustratingly inexact interpretation. Scholars have carefully studied nonverbal communication but have only scratched the surface of the topic in many areas. If placed in the proper perspective, it can be a valuable source of cues in communication situations.

Burbinster identified six functions for nonverbal communication (see Table 10-1).¹²

Nonverbal signals that *complement* the verbal message repeat it. Typically, these signals accompany what is being said. For example, a technician explaining the varying gap widths in faulty components in a heating system might hold up her thumb and index finger and vary the gap between them as she discusses the problem. Or a supervisor welcoming a subordinate back after a lengthy illness might give him a warm handshake to stress how pleased he is at the other's return.

Those nonverbal signals that *accent* call our attention to a matter under discussion. A common example is a person pounding on a desk as she makes an important point. People

Table 10-1 Functions of Nonverbal Behavior

Complement
Accent
Contradict
Repeat
Regulate
Substitute

may also use vocalics, the nonverbal aspects of the voice itself, to highlight a point. Someone differentiating between one choice and another might say “I want *this* one and not *that*.”

The nonverbal signals that *contradict* are less obvious. These are usually sent unintentionally by the subconscious to say nonverbally the opposite of what is being said verbally. Either subtly or obviously, nonverbal cues will often tell the careful observers the truth when the verbal cues do not. This complex area of nonverbal communication will be discussed later under the heading “Nonverbal Signs of Deception.”

Repeating occurs when we have already sent a message using one form of communication and wish to emphasize the point being made. It differs from complementing in that it is not done simultaneously with the verbal comment. For example, a demonstration following a verbal description of a tool’s use is a nonverbal repetition.

Regulating, the fifth purpose Burbinster suggests, is a subtle and important one. Regulating occurs during conversations to signal to our partner to “slow,” “stop,” and even “wait your turn” and let the other person know when we are ready to listen or to speak. Watch an ongoing conversation, and you will quickly spot a variety of these cues. A speaker who is not finished with his point but is being interrupted might speak louder or faster to keep his turn (thus using vocalics). Another might hold up her hand to say “not yet, let me

finish.” On the other hand, a speaker will usually look directly at the listener to indicate that the listener’s turn is imminent.

Substituting is a less common nonverbal signal than the others. When we cannot send a message by verbal cues, we might choose to use nonverbal ones—especially emblems, which will be discussed in the next section on movement and gestures—to get the point across to our receiver. A supervisor visiting a loud factory might use the OK sign to signal an employee. This will likely be more effective than something shouted.

From a theoretical perspective, nonverbal communication also serves another important function: communication redundancy. This concept refers to the phenomena built into any language system that combat the effects of noise. It simply means that much of the meaning of a message can be deduced from other elements in the message that have already appeared. The TV game show *Wheel of Fortune* is an example of redundancy in that not every word or letter must be on the game board before one can guess the correct phrase.

While part of a message delivers new information, much of it exists to ensure the points being made are understood. Far from being a negative phenomenon, communication redundancy is vitally important because it helps ensure that our message gets past the

STOP AND THINK

Which of Burbinster’s functions is exemplified by the following gestures:

1. A woman dropping her voice as she flirts with someone she is attracted to?
2. A man jiggling his leg as he is being interviewed for a job?
3. A grandmother putting her finger to her lips as her four-year-old grandson screams for candy?

various barriers that environmental, organizational, or interpersonal elements erect. When a message is made more redundant, that is, when the information in it has been made more predictable to the receiver, the message has a greater chance of transferring the meaning the sender intends it to convey.

Every communication system is redundant. Verbal languages build in redundancy through a variety of means including grammar and syntax. Most of the functions addressed by nonverbal communication serve in some way as redundancy. Thus, as we discuss an issue with someone, we will use nonverbal signals to complement, accent, repeat, and even substitute to get a point across. This may be done without even thinking about it. Even when a nonverbal signal contradicts the verbal, additional nonverbal signals are likely to follow to underscore the contradiction.¹³ Thus, a shake of the head denying a request is followed by a smile to indicate goodwill.

Some nonverbal behaviors are *innate*, others are *learned* from the community around us, and some are *mixed*. For instance, eye blinking patterns and blushing appear to be innate—universal, involuntary behaviors that occur in certain communication situations. Other cues such as the eyewink and the thumbs-up are learned, and they signal different meanings in different cultures. A third group of nonverbal behaviors (laugh, smile) is mixed in that they occur in every culture, but they can be controlled, and their meanings can change. In some Asian cultures, for example, a small laugh may occur naturally but may convey discomfort and submission rather than affiliation and pleasure.

This chapter now explores several key areas of nonverbal communication and suggests how managers can use them to their advantage. It also looks at how nonverbal indications of deception can be detected through careful observation.

MOVEMENT

Say “nonverbal communication” to most people, and they probably think of movement, which is technically kinesics. Nonverbal communication consists of far more than just one general category, but movement is the most studied of the categories. It includes gestures, posture, and stance as well as bodily movement.

As summarized in Table 10–2, gestures may include *emblems*, *illustrators*, *regulators*, *affect displays*, and *adapters*.¹⁴ While people usually use gestures without thinking, a conscious awareness of them can help a manager communicate more efficiently. An understanding of, and training in, effective signals can open up the possibility of our strategic, conscious use of them. A leader in customer service, The Walt Disney Company, understands the power of nonverbals. The Disney Institute, the company’s consulting division, teaches employees at all their theme parks to give directions by pointing with two fingers rather than one because it seems more polite. Similarly, if a teacher calls on a student by extending an open palm rather than pointing a finger at the student, it seems more respectful and welcoming.

Earlier, we noted that nonverbal signals usually suggest meaning; they do not give direct meaning. *Emblems* are an exception in that they actually stand for something else. The OK sign is one example; another is the time out—one palm held at a right angle to the other.

Table 10–2 Types of Gestures

Emblems
Illustrators
Regulators
Affect Displays
Adapters

Illustrators complement verbal communication by providing an example of, or reinforcing, what is being said. When a person is trying to explain an item that is not present, what is more natural than drawing it in the air?

Regulators are gestures that both subtly and obviously control what a speaker says. They arise from a variety of sources, including the hands—for example, when one holds up the hand palm outward to keep another from interrupting. Turning the palm toward you and wiggling the fingers is a beckoning gesture in the United States. We also regulate to draw some speakers out and rein others in with gestures.

The *affect display* is more complex than most gestures and involves several parts of the body. For example, suppose you are talking to someone who has a scowl on his face as he sits up straight but is turned slightly away from you. His arms cross his chest, and you have little doubt this person does not like the idea under discussion. The affect display signals to another person what we are feeling and can show pleasure as well as anger, boredom as well as interest. Reading such nonverbal signals from others is rarely a problem. The challenge lies in controlling these within ourselves in some situations. We may not always want to show what we are feeling, so we must control these nonverbals, particularly if it could affect our current communication strategy.

The *adapter* may be the least appreciated source of kinesic messages; however, it can be quite important. In many situations, when one behavior might be inappropriate, the body will adapt by sending signals that would provide a solution, if one could only implement it. For example, the person wishing to leave, but unable to do so, might start to move his crossed leg in imitation of walking. Another person under stress may begin to twist the paper clip she is holding as a socially acceptable substitute for what she would like to do with the person she is reprimanding. That employee being reprimanded may wrap his arms around himself as a sort of substitute hug to provide the comfort he needs at that moment. A nervous speaker may rock to calm herself. Adapters often appear as a pattern of seemingly irrelevant nonverbal signals, but to the careful observer, their presence may suggest discomfort. Similarly, in stressful situations when projecting an image of self-control is crucial, be aware of the nonverbal signals you may be sending. Keeping a calm face while clenching your fists may reveal more than intended.

While gestures may be the most obvious example of meaningful movement, other kinesic behaviors contribute significantly to message meaning as well. Take posture, for example. Slumping, leaning, standing with weight on one leg, and rounding the shoulders all connote weakness and lack of confidence. By contrast, standing at military attention (head up, shoulders back, chest forward, and weight evenly distributed on both feet) connotes power, alertness, and confidence. Managers who have mastered the elements of good posture often are attended to even before they begin to speak.

Amy Cuddy, a Harvard Business School professor who specializes in nonverbal communication, delivered a TED talk in 2012 that explained how “faking” body language

associated with dominance could actually improve a person's self-image. Since then, 16 million viewers have watched her talk on YouTube, putting it in the top 5 of all 1,600 TED talks. Dr. Cuddy argued that "power posing" with head erect and arms and legs outstretched not only gives others the impression that one is worthy of belief and respect, but it actually helps the poser to also adopt those beliefs about himself. In short, she points out, "Fake it 'til you make it and then you will become it."¹⁵

Another example of kinesic communication is head movement. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a good listener often indicates that he is paying attention by nodding and/or tilting his head. On the other hand, a speaker who nods or tilts his head while talking may be interpreted as unsure of himself or even submissive.

Mimicry is a form of gesturing where two people mirror each other's movements. It is typically an unconscious and automatic behavior triggered by an abundance of mirroring neurons in the brain. Mimicry has been shown to positively influence the flow of conversation, as well as mutual liking. The back-and-forth exchange of smiles, head nods, arm crossing, and hand movements creates this social circuit that leaves two people feeling better and better about the other person. Studies have proven this to be true in salary negotiations and job interviews, where ample mimicking correlated to strong feelings of trust and likeability.¹⁶ We also communicate meaning by the way we walk. When a speaker strides quickly to the platform, she seems energetic, bold, and in command of the situation. Her credibility is enhanced by this nonverbal element. However, if she walks around while speaking or perhaps sways, rocks, or shifts her weight from foot to foot repeatedly, her impression is diminished.

STOP AND THINK

The next time you are dining with friends or family, deliberately take a sip of water, or wipe your lips with your napkin, or lean away from the table. What happens next? Yes, within a minute everyone else at the table will mimic your nonverbal behavior.

To summarize, movement is a very important category of nonverbal communication. We pay attention to various parts of a communicator's body—head, trunk, arms, legs—as we watch and listen, drawing inferences from their movements. A list of common interpretations of kinesic cues appears in Table 10-3. But take note: As you will read in Chapter 11, our culture defines both verbal and nonverbal behavior, so keep in mind that the "meanings" of the kinesic cues in the table may change

from culture to culture. For example, head nodding is a sign of affirmation in the United States, but it's a sign of disagreement in the South Slavic States, Iran, and Sri Lanka. Managers in any culture must attend to kinesics when they communicate so that their body language contributes to, rather than contradicts or detracts from, the intended meaning.

SPATIAL MESSAGES

Proxemics refers to the space around us and how we and others relate to it. Space and distance can reveal much and merit careful attention. Most people hearing "proxemics"

Table 10–3 Kinesic Cues

Body Segment	Movement	Interpretation
Head	Gazing Shifting, darting eyes Eyebrows up Smiling mouth Nodding Tilting head Head down	Attentive; honest Uncertain; lying Challenging; open Enjoyment; pleasure Listening; agreeing Interested Defensive
Trunk and shoulders	Leaning toward Leaning away Posture slouched Expanded chest Shrunken chest Buttoning jacket	Interested; rapport Lack of interest; skeptical Low self-esteem Confident Threatened Formal; leaving
Hands and arms	Touching others Touching self Repetitive movements Hand over mouth while speaking Arms crossed Fingers steepled Hands on hips Hands in pockets Palms showing Pointing Clenched hands; wringing hands; picking cuticle	Powerful Nervous; anxious Lying; unsure of self Want to escape Bored; closed to ideas Confident Challenging; arrogant Secretive Trusting Authoritative; aggressive Need reassurance

think only of personal space, the personal “bubble” surrounding a person. That is a good place to start, but the concept encompasses far more than just that.

Spatial Zones

Edward Hall studied use of personal distances and determined that Americans have four arbitrarily established proxemic zones, described in Figure 10–1, in which we interact.¹⁷ Strategic managers are aware of these zones and appreciate how they and others react when their spaces are invaded.

Our language suggests we all are aware of personal space to some degree. We talk about someone “keeping his distance,” or we complain when we perceive others “invading our space,” or say “They are crowding me on this issue” when in fact what they are doing has little to do with territory. When someone is pressing another on an issue, the other person may respond, “Give me breathing room,” or less politely, “Keep out of my face.”

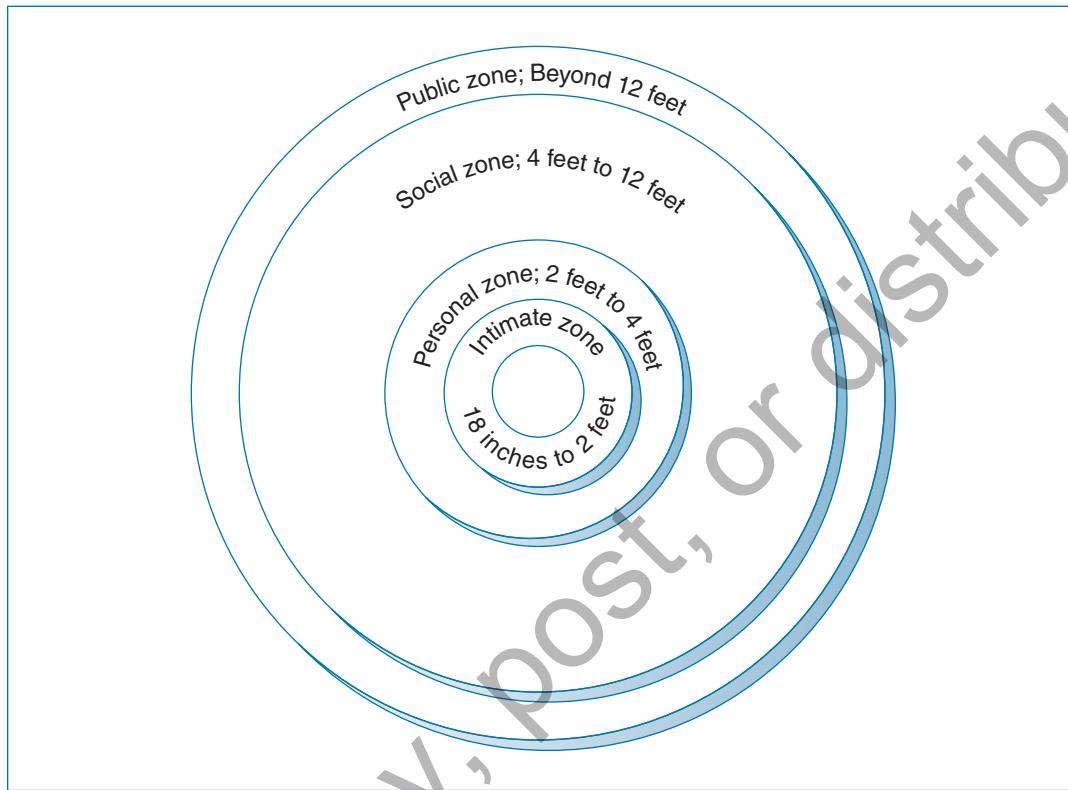
In the United States, business people generally operate within four zones: intimate, personal, social, and public. In the discussion that follows, keep in mind that the figures are averages. They reflect the general culture, situational mandates, and the relationship between the parties. A number of factors enter into any interpersonal exchange. These can include personal appearance, culture, gender, and age. Thus, we may react differently to a tall person compared to a short person, and we may draw nearer to an attractive person than to another who is less attractive.¹⁸

As discussed in the next chapter, meanings for nonverbal behaviors differ from culture to culture. In the United States, the *intimate zone* ranges from physical contact to roughly 1.5 to 2 feet. It is reserved for those who are psychologically close. When others invade it, especially for more than a moment, a person usually feels uncomfortable and is likely to draw back or put up some sort of barrier, although often without consciously knowing why.

The *personal zone* extends from the edge of the intimate zone out to roughly 4 feet. Americans reserve it for close friends but permit others to enter it temporarily during introductions. Watch as two strangers come together for an introduction. As they shake hands, they will often stand with one leg forward and the other ready to back up. Then, when the greeting is over, both will usually retreat into the next zone. Cooperating on a task or simultaneously studying a document may bring people into their personal space, but they typically compensate by not making eye contact.

The next area is the *social zone*. It extends from about 4 feet to 12 feet and is the space in which we would like to conduct much of our daily business. Relationships between managers and their employees might begin in this area and continue for a time. They will often move into the personal zone once trust has developed, but this takes time.¹⁹ In the US culture, the *public zone* extends beyond 12 feet and reflects the distance at which most would like to keep strangers. Little communication of a business nature takes place in this zone. Perhaps the only spoken communication that occurs is the public speech. We see the formal institutionalized reflection of this distance in the arrangement of public auditoriums

Figure 10–1 Spatial Zones



or even in the layout of many political rallies. Even if the latter is not too crowded, the audience will often keep its distance.

For managers, the value of understanding spatial zones is clear. An observant communicator can gauge the relative warmth that exists in a relationship by the distances individuals keep during interactions. As trust grows, distances generally diminish. Thus, allies sit next to each other in meetings. However, other factors determine spatial differences as well. Let us consider some of these.

Spatial Differences

As we have said, proxemic zones vary from culture to culture. For example, businesspeople in many South American and Arab countries typically interact with people at far closer ranges than do US businesspeople. Often, when people from the United States interact with

individuals from these cultures, the varying proxemic zones expected by the groups create awkwardness until someone adapts to the needs of the others and either gives up some ground or extends the distance.

Distance preferences also vary by gender. Men tend to maintain larger personal space bubbles than do women. Women are more likely to allow men or other women to come closer than men, and women will be more tolerant of temporary violations of their own space.²⁰ Men take up more space with their bodies and their artifacts, a tendency that is often perceived as indicating power.

STOP AND THINK

The next time you are in a meeting, look around the table at the amount of space each person takes up. Do you see any consistencies across gender? Age? Power?

A recent study of 850 workers at midsize companies resulted in interesting gender differences regarding workspace preferences. Women voiced preferences for privacy, natural light, and the option to personalize their space. Men, on the other hand, spoke out strongly for just one environmental attribute: the ability to control the room temperature.²¹

Naturally, circumstances may artificially affect our use of zones. The classic example of this is the crowded elevator, where people allow others to invade personal and intimate zones. Here, though, people will try to adapt by avoiding eye contact or blocking—that is, by folding the arms across the chest or putting up their briefcases as a sort of shield. If someone accidentally touches another, apologies quickly follow.

When traditional zones need to be ignored for an extended period, people will stake out their territory. One way is to create even spacing between participants, as when seated around a meeting table with movable seats. In other situations, people will erect some sort of barrier to signal the limits of their own space. Watch at meetings around a conference table as people unconsciously arrange notebooks, jackets, coffee cups, and other business artifacts around the perimeters of their territory. They are signaling where the boundaries of their personal space lie in that crowded environment. Similarly, students in a class typically occupy the same seat throughout the term, claiming it as “their” space and piling their belongings around them.

Permanent, or “fixed,” spaces such as cubicles or large desks often are perceived as barriers. It is rude to come behind the boss’s desk or peek over the top of the cubicle. But semifixed spaces such as conference tables can connote cooperation and shared responsibility (see Figure 10–2), as the next section explains.

Strategic Use of Space

Managers should be aware that intruding into another’s territory without an invitation can be an annoyance or even a threat, no matter what a person’s rank. Recognizing the boundaries of both fixed and semifixed spaces communicates respect to the individual. Artifacts belonging to another individual should be regarded as personal. One should never rifle through a coworker’s desk drawers for writing implements or sit on the edge of that person’s desk.

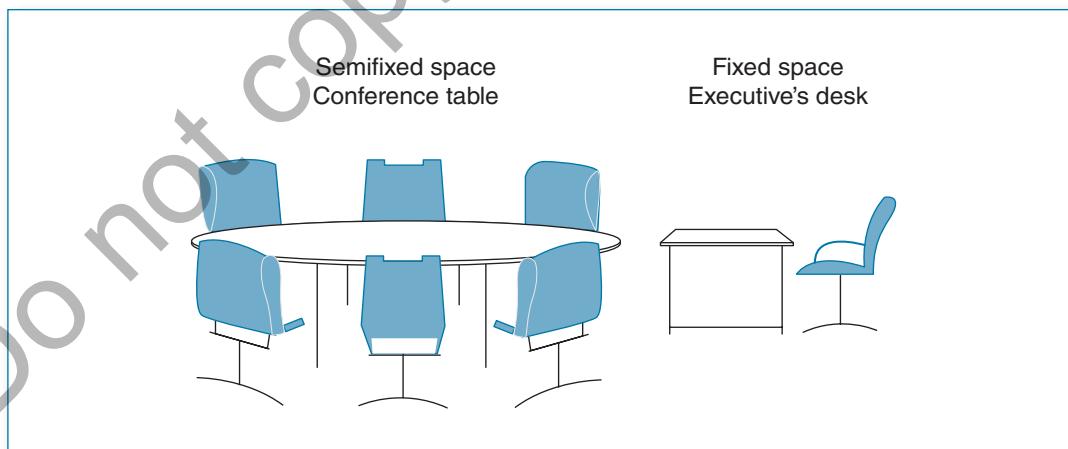
Managers can use space to create an air of power and authority or an air of collegiality and respect. Everyone reads the environment for nonverbal clues. The amount of space allotted to another, the amount of privacy that space entails, and where in the building that space is located can speak volumes about organizational power. Generally, more is better than less, bigger is better than smaller, and especially in the United States, new is better than old. In addition, the closer people are to the organization's leaders, the more power they are perceived by others to enjoy.

On the other hand, managers who value open communication will work in proximity to their subordinates and coworkers, will minimize status-filled artifacts such as heavy furniture, and will discourage territoriality. Indeed, contemporary organizations require that all employees share their "space" as a symbol of cooperation and teamwork. When Michael Bloomberg was elected mayor of New York City, he rearranged New York City Hall to resemble a giant, open bullpen, eliminating private offices. This look resembled the trading area at Salomon Brothers, the investment firm where he had been a partner. Again, his aim was to free the flow of information. In 2014, when Bill de Blasio became mayor of New York City, he decided to keep his predecessor's open-air office arrangement, though he had criticized it during the campaign.

Office design can put the right people together. At WPP, a British marketing group (formerly Wire and Plastics Product), walls were removed and coffee areas created. Rather than assigning accountants and media people to separate floors, they work side by side in teams to ensure that they keep talking to each other.²²

Some studies have noted differences in office space preferences among age groups. In one study, 40 percent of younger workers, commonly labeled Generation Y or Millennials (born between 1980 and 2000), preferred to work in open office plans; only 18 percent said

Figure 10–2 Fixed and Semifixed Space in the Same Office



they preferred cubicles with privacy panels. Older workers, on the other hand, said they worked best in private offices (45 percent); just 16 percent said they preferred collaborative spaces.²³

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

The old saying “beauty is only skin deep” may not be true in the business world. Recent studies have identified a connection between wages and appearance. Daniel Hamermesh, a University of Texas economist who has studied the beauty benefit for twenty years, determined that above-average-looking men earn 17 percent more than below-average-looking men, and above-average-looking women earn 12 percent more than below-average-looking women. That translates into \$230,000 more earnings over a lifetime, on average.²⁴

Further, there appears to be significant agreement about what is considered attractive. For one thing, height is a factor. In the United States, the average adult male is 5 feet 9 inches tall, yet 30 percent of CEOs are at least 6 feet 2 inches. Another aspect of appearance that equates with success is a strong chin. Among forty-two CEOs from the top 50 *Fortune* 500 companies, some 90 percent showed nonreceding-to-prominent chins, versus 40 percent of the US population. Apparently, we equate such jawlines with business success and confidence.²⁵

Aspects of our appearance such as height, chin prominence, and physical beauty are not easily changed. One might argue that they should not be relevant factors for business success, anyway. Nevertheless, most business people try to maximize the positive impact of their appearance, and one relatively simple way to reach that goal is with our choice of clothing. What we wear says much about who we are, or at least who we want to be perceived as. Dress is an integral part of the first impression we form on meeting someone and is often the key to initial credibility.²⁶ Consequently, managers should pay close attention to what they wear in order to send the right message to others. This section will focus on general principles for effective dress since clothing styles are so changeable. One piece of advice is enduring, though. Be neither the first nor the last to adopt a fashion.

The key to dress is to fit in with the organization’s culture, to show by your appearance that you have adopted the organization’s values. Thus, financial institutions expect employees to look conservative, assuring customers and clients of their stability. Ad agency employees are often expected to dress more fashion forward, indicating their flair, creativity, and contemporary style. High-tech organizations de-emphasize a “corporate” appearance, to the extent that executives are dressed as casually as the lowest-level employee. Mark Zuckerberg, founder and CEO of Facebook, Inc., is one of the world’s wealthiest and most influential business leaders and philanthropists. His typical casual style of dressing in a T-shirt, hooded sweatshirt, and jeans has become the norm for people in his industry. Why? Mr. Zuckerberg’s style reflects his personal values, as stated on his own Facebook page: “openness, making things that help people connect and share what’s important to them, . . . minimalism.”

The occasion will also dictate personal appearance. While observing people at events such as weddings and funerals may lead one to conclude that our culture is moving toward more informality, in many business settings, casual dress is considered disrespectful. Job interviews, client visits, and sales presentations call for careful attention to appearance. Recruiters often draw conclusions about applicants based on the style and condition of their footwear and hair. Thus, when shopping for an “interview suit,” applicants should also shop for dress shoes.

Managers must remember that everyday appearance also conveys important messages. Many contemporary organizations have developed a detailed dress code or employee uniform in recognition of the importance of personal appearance. According to a 2006 survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, six in ten employers allow a dress-down day at least once a week. But the number of employers allowing casual dress every day has plunged from 53 percent in 2002 to a new low of 38 percent.²⁷ The reason for the return to more dressy attire is, in part, because of the confusion generated by business casual standards. But mostly, managers have the impression that when employees dress casually, the quality of the work suffers.

Legal issues can arise from dress policies, too. Employers must be careful to enforce dress codes on all employees, not just one group (such as women) to avoid accusations of discrimination. In 2007 a Phoenix, Arizona, jury awarded \$287,000 to a Somali employee who had worked at Alamo Rent A Car. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission argued that the company engaged in religious discrimination for firing her when, as a practicing Muslim, she wore the hijab, a type of head scarf, during the holy month of Ramadan.²⁸ Employers whose dress codes require wearing certain apparel or refraining from wearing certain apparel need to show business justification for the requirements, reasonably accommodate their employees’ religious beliefs, or ask the employees to seek an exemption from wearing religious garb while on duty.

STOP AND THINK

1. Look around your workplace. Is the old advice, “dress for the job you want, not the job you have,” still true?
2. To what extent is appearance a relevant factor in hiring and promotion decisions in your organization?

had been adopted to match customer expectations. But by 1993, when Gerstner took over, it seemed anachronistic, stuffy, and emblematic of the company’s demise. The “new” IBM look was more casual and contemporary. Again, Gerstner advises, “Dress according to the circumstances of your day and recognize who you will be with (customers, government leaders, or just your colleagues . . .).”²⁹

Observers always assign meaning to details such as accessories, color, jewelry, and emblems worn on the jacket lapel or hat. A prominent example of the symbolic nature of clothing is IBM. In Lou Gerstner’s book, *Who Says Elephants Can’t Dance?*, the former CEO describes how he revitalized the failing corporation. One of his major efforts was culture change, and one of his methods was prescribing changes in employee dress. The famous “old” IBM look had been crisp white shirts, dark suits, and conservative ties. Originally, it

In summary, no matter whether the organization's culture is formal or casual, no matter whether the occasion is special or ordinary, managers' appearance should reflect the expectations and values of their audience. By adhering to the principle of "fitting in," managers will enhance their credibility and improve their communication effectiveness.

VOICE

The final source of nonverbal signals this chapter will focus on is paralanguage, or vocal style. The spoken word contains more than linguistic cues. Nonverbal aspects of vocal delivery include the pitch, rate, volume, tone, onset, and duration of messages. These cues are among the least obvious to most listeners, with the likely exception of tone, yet they can be as important as, or even more important than, the actual words used.³⁰ The pitch of the speaker's voice, the onset of the message—that is, the time that it takes between the person's taking the turn and the message's beginning—and the length of the message send subtle cues.

The following is an example of the effect of onset. If we are asking someone about a serious issue and the person's responses come more quickly than expected, we might suspect he is not serious or has rehearsed the responses. Similarly, when someone takes far longer to answer a question than expected, we begin to wonder if all that is being said is true. And, as the discussion in the next section on nonverbal signs of deception shows, we even monitor pitch and can read meaning into changes of it.

Here is another example of how pitch affects the impression. Spoken English sentences follow certain pitch patterns, depending on their meaning. That is, declaratory sentences (statements) end with a dropped pitch, and interrogatory sentences (questions that ask for a yes or no response) end with a raised pitch. A common violation of these pitch patterns, known as "uptalk," occurs when speakers end their statements with a raised pitch, making them sound like questions. The listener, noticing the uptalk, often concludes that the speaker is unsure of the truth of their statements and is asking for validation. In a business meeting, when someone says, "Here's what I think the customer wants," with a raised pitch at the end, others may well conclude that the speaker in fact does not know what the customer wants.

The importance of vocal cues to managers is obvious in sending as well as receiving. It is important to monitor the signals being sent, particularly for tone, to ensure that the intended communication strategy is not being undermined by subtle nonverbal cues.

Speakers have a typical vocal style that distinguishes their voice from that of other speakers. The elements consist of a basic pitch, rate, pause pattern, and volume. Certain characteristics of voice are also regional in origin, such as articulation and pacing. The southern US drawl and the northeastern US clipped dialect are examples. In addition to these basic vocal characteristics, speakers can vary their pitch, rate, and volume to emphasize their meaning and to communicate emotion. Failure to vary these vocal characteristics results in what is commonly known as a monotonal vocal style. In the US business culture, a monotonal speaking style connotes lack of interest and even lack of authority. Managers

may unintentionally undermine their message by the style in which it is delivered. Chapter 5 described good vocal style in more detail, but these criteria apply to everyday speaking as well as to formal presentations.

To summarize, in business, speaking in a clear, firm, low-pitched voice connotes confidence and results in more attentive listening. Nasal, shrill, quiet, breathy, or harsh voices are devalued. Excessive use of filled pauses (“uh,” “well,”) gives an impression of uncertainty. Managers must learn to use their vocal characteristics to maximize the message, rather than detract from it, just as they must use the preceding nonverbal categories.

APPLICATIONS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Until recently, the impact of managers’ nonverbal behavior was impossible to objectively measure. However, researchers at the Human Dynamics Group of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Lab have developed a range of small, wearable electronic devices that can easily and accurately gather data on tone of voice, proximity, and body language.³¹ Their data about these nonverbal communication patterns can be applied to improving communication effectiveness in business settings.

Phone Sales and Service

In one case, the MIT researchers worked with a British call center outsourcing company, Vertex Data Science, to improve the effectiveness of call center operators. The MIT group used electronic sensors (or e-sensors) to measure the speech patterns of operators during calls with customers. The group did not measure the actual words used by the operators but focused on variations in tone and pitch as well as the amount of time that the operators spent talking versus listening to the callers. The researchers concluded that successful operators spend more time listening than talking and use strong fluctuations in their voice amplitude and pitch to suggest interest and responsiveness to the customers’ needs. After only a few seconds of measuring these factors, the researchers were able to accurately predict the eventual success or failure of a call the majority of the time.³²

Teams and Meetings

The results of the MIT studies have implications for team communication. As discussed in Chapter 4, *groupthink* is a common problem in teams. That is, individuals often conform to the perceived group consensus despite their personal reservations. E-sensors measuring nonverbal communication behaviors could potentially help prevent groupthink by raising awareness of nonverbal communication patterns of individual team members. For example, one or two individuals in the team might be overbearing while not realizing that their nonverbal behaviors discourage others from voicing their opinions. The MIT group believes that they could eventually use e-sensors to select team members with complementary nonverbal communication styles so that the team would be “optimized” for communication effectiveness. Further, they believe they can create “smart environments” by using

e-sensors to identify negative nonverbal behaviors in real time, thereby allowing them to prevent communication breakdowns.

The MIT research results can also be applied to formal meetings. Managers may inadvertently sabotage meetings by using inappropriate nonverbal communication or sending incongruent verbal and nonverbal messages. E-sensors can determine whether a manager is using enough vocal variation or body movement to convey the importance of a message. E-sensors also can show the manager what behaviors are confusing the meeting participants, eventually leading to more effective and efficient meeting management.

Body language can affect the outcome of negotiations during meetings. In a separate study, the MIT group simulated face-to-face salary negotiations and was able to accurately predict the “winner” of the negotiation with 87 percent accuracy after only five minutes of measuring body movement patterns.

Informal Communication

Informal coworker conversations are a common method of spreading messages throughout a company, and nonverbal communication is a part of how these messages are interpreted. E-sensors developed by the MIT researchers have been used to monitor nonverbal communication in informal settings; the data on proximity, body language, and vocal style allow more accurate sharing of information, with more people being on the same page.

For example, Bob from the accounting department has a habit of standing very close to coworkers when he talks to them, making listeners uneasy. Data from wearable e-sensors that compare the proximity of individuals during their informal communication events would make Bob aware that he stands the closest to others during conversations and that his messages are also least likely to be conveyed effectively. Bob would then give listeners more space, allowing them to relax and concentrate on what he is trying to tell them.

External Communication

Customer service is another area where data about nonverbal communication patterns can be used to benefit the company. Vertex Data Science’s use of electronic monitoring of their call center operators (described above) is one example. Sales teams and customer service personnel (e.g., hotel reservation clerks) could also receive valuable information from studies like the one conducted at Vertex. Again, the goal is to improve the level of service that customers receive, resulting in more business and an enhanced company reputation.

Nonverbal communication research can be applied to customer service in the tourism and hospitality industry. Following service failure, customers want their problems resolved as quickly as possible and, in doing so, they have certain expectations with respect to service providers’ behavior. During this period of anxiety, customers are particularly vigilant about nonverbal cues in attempting to discern the service provider’s intentions and attitudes. The display of inappropriate nonverbal behaviors, such as frowning, lack of eye contact, and closed body posture, is likely to create even more negative feelings.³³ The ability to objectively measure nonverbal communication with e-sensors and use that information to train customer service employees would greatly benefit the organization.

STOP AND THINK

1. What, if any, ethical issues surround the monitoring of employees' nonverbal behaviors?
2. Does asking them to wear e-sensors violate their right to privacy?
3. Would you be willing to participate in similar studies/training programs at your organization?
4. To what extent is monitoring employees' nonverbal behaviors during workplace interactions similar to monitoring their computer usage?

Another application of this type of research is with managers who operate in the global economy. As you will read in Chapter 11, acceptable nonverbal behavior varies from culture to culture and country to country. E-sensor data could be used to train business travelers in the most effective nonverbal communication patterns for the country and culture that they will be working in.

Finally, independent agencies (such as advertising firms) and/or individuals within a corporation who participate in business-to-business (B2B) relationships with other professionals could benefit from the use of e-sensors that measure nonverbal communication. These individuals regularly make formal presentations and give briefings to clients and other executives. E-sensor data

would help them learn the most effective nonverbal communication patterns, such as conveying confidence, during presentations. Other applications include effectively using nonverbal communication to convey negative messages and strengthen client relationships.

NONVERBAL SIGNS OF DECEPTION

In many situations, managers must evaluate other employees to determine if the data they work with are accurate. While the data set out in a report can usually be tested objectively, information derived from interpersonal interactions such as disciplinary and preemployment screening interviews frequently offers little opportunity for immediate objective verification. Fortunately, some nonverbal signals can help managers assess the veracity of verbal statements. As we have seen, nonverbal signals usually complement verbal ones and serve as needed reinforcement to reduce the uncertainty in communication. However, they may also unintentionally contradict the verbal ones they accompany.

When contradictory nonverbal signals betray deception, they are called *leakage*. During deception, certain types of nonverbal signals often escape from the deceiver despite attempts at control. The subconscious apparently betrays the speaker through this nonverbal leakage. People also often unconsciously read and interpret these signals. Managers can learn to spot nonverbal signs of deception.

Several patterns of nonverbal behavior crop up during deception.³⁴ Since some sources of nonverbal signals can be controlled in deceptive situations better than others—for example, looking another in the eye while deceiving—we will focus on signals that are difficult to control consciously. These include movement, dress, personal space, and voice.

Remember that nonverbal behavior usually *suggests* meaning rather than having a one-to-one correlation with a specific word or concept. The meaning of nonverbal signs might vary, and a gesture might be motivated by something besides what is suggested here.

To detect possible nonverbal signs of deception, it is important to be in the right place. Often, interviewees are seated behind desks so significant cues go undetected. The face, always likely to be visible, can be a poor source of deception cues (although hand-to-face contacts are valuable cues). When possible, seat the other person in an open chair facing you. Nonverbal signs from the hands, trunk, legs, or feet then will be more evident.³⁵

Baseline

Deception signs are behaviors that differ from normal nonverbal interactions, so you also need to know what behavior is normal for that individual. Researchers have found that when observers see an individual giving honest answers before the person is seen lying, the observers' ability to detect dishonesty increases significantly over situations with no behavioral baseline. You do not detect dishonesty by looking for the lie, according to psychologist Paul Ekman of the University of California–San Francisco, but by identifying the change in behavior that suggests a person is nervous when he/she should not be.³⁶

The individual's baseline is also invaluable because one person might behave differently from others in identical circumstances. A baseline allows one to gauge if nervous behavior reflects the overall situation or is a reaction to the question being asked.

In the job interview, a baseline is relatively easy. During the preliminary chat, ask non-threatening questions. Begin with the résumé before moving into the unknown. Watch for nonverbal cues. An investigatory interrogation could use the same pattern. Small talk serves its traditional primary purpose of putting the other at ease and a secondary one of providing a behavioral baseline.

The following sections identify some typical signs of deception as summarized in Table 10–4.

Table 10–4 Nonverbal Signs of Deception

Unexpected movements and gestures
Manipulation of clothing
Increase of personal space
Vocal variations

Movement

Gestures and trunk movements, part of the broad category of kinesics, are probably the most valuable nonverbal signs of deception. Perhaps the most common deception-related gestures are the hand-to-face movements, and the most common of these is the mouth cover. More subtle is the single finger to the mouth, the moustache stroke, or the nose rub. Other gestures suggesting deception are nail biting and lip biting. Hiding the hands by putting them in pockets or pulling shirtsleeves down to the fingertips is a sign that the person is “hiding” something more than their hands.

Conversational gestures vary as well. Generally, when one is comfortable with honest responses, gestures are open and outward. During deception, people both limit their gestures and keep them closer to the body. And while smiling decreases and the frequency of gestures used to illustrate conversational points slows down in deception, the gestures suggesting deception increase. One of these is the hand shrug emblem. Researchers have found that deceptive speakers will *shrug their hands*—turning the palms up from palms down position—twice as frequently as in nondeceptive messages. This signal suggests a subconscious pleading for the listener to believe what is being said.

Some authorities also believe that an increase in leg and foot movements may indicate deception.³⁷ Foot tapping, leg rocking while the legs are crossed, and frequent shifts in leg posture are examples of this kind of activity. A rhythmic “walking” motion with one crossed leg has long been recognized as an intention gesture suggesting the person would like to walk away. But keep in mind the need to compare behavior with the baseline.

Signals of deception are not just confined to the body. They can involve dress, space, and voice.

Dress

With clothing, nonverbal leakage mainly shows up in the manipulation of dress, which may suggest a respondent feels threatened by a given question. An interviewee may suddenly close and button his or her coat or begin to tug nervously at a pants leg or skirt hem. This may betray a fear of having some deception uncovered. Other signals include straightening or tugging at the collar, smoothing the tie, picking at lint, or rubbing at a spot.

Personal Space

Proxemics, relating to the distance that one keeps from others as well as one’s relation to the surrounding environment, may be a rich source of deception cues. An interviewee might shift the chair’s position or might suddenly lean back on the chair’s rear legs. Moving away from the interviewer may show a lack of cooperativeness or be a feeble attempt to put distance between the interviewee and interviewer by altering the environment. Often, when a person physically backs up, the other person comes closer. In formal conversations occurring while standing, the interviewee may lean back or step back during a deceptive response even while blocking by folding the arms across the chest.

An interviewee who has been relaxed may shift under pressure. For example, deception may leak out when the person suddenly crosses her arms and legs and leans back. The vulnerable forward posture is less comfortable when facing the fear of discovery. Conversely, an interviewee might “open up” during a response, suggesting openness and honesty. An interviewee may also try to erect “signal blunders” to hide behind. These may be such subtle activities as placing a purse or briefcase in the lap as a barrier.

Artifacts

One's personal possessions in the office and the physical environment of the office itself offer cues, and they can be manipulated to create the intended perception. Some people will meticulously decorate their offices in an attempt to manage the impressions of their visitors. Although many of these decorations can reflect honest identity claims, some can be strategic and even deceptive.³⁸ How many times have you been lured back to a car salesperson's office to find an overabundance of religious symbols? How about cute kiddie photos? They seem to say, "You can trust me. I'm a man of faith, and a family man, and I would never give you a raw deal." Excessively showcasing awards, plaques, and framed certificates on a "brag wall" is an all-too-common attempt at self-promotion. Personal effects in the office should be used as clues toward the bigger picture of who the real person is, but the impression they give off needs to be interpreted carefully.

Voice

Voice is another rich source of cues. Most relevant in detecting deception are the voice's pitch, tone, and volume, as well as the response's onset and duration. Authorities have long known that deceptive answers have a slower onset than honest ones.

In addition, deceptive answers are likely to be longer and less specific than honest ones. The deceiver may be attempting to fill in the gap with needless material. Some see length as an attempt to make a deceptive answer more elaborate and thus more convincing than the deceiver knows it is. The answer's length may also reflect the pauses and hesitations needed as the interviewee stumbles through the answer.

The final source of deception is pitch. Researchers have found that vocal pitch rises measurably in deceptive responses. While observers frequently could not say why they labeled such a response as deceptive, they knew it was, and research instruments could show the difference.³⁹

In many interpersonal, managerial interactions, nonverbal elements are the source of most of the message. While not everything communicated nonverbally is done so consciously or intentionally, the unintentional signals may be as valid as the intentional ones and potentially more useful. Keep in mind, though, the suggestions about establishing a behavioral baseline for each person in specific situations. In addition, if deception is suspected, use that as an impetus for further investigation or at least caution, not as the final word.

SUMMARY

Everything but the words themselves may be considered the domain of nonverbal communication. Every managerial interaction has nonverbal elements that add to or qualify the interaction. It is difficult to put precise meanings to nonverbal signals, and they vary

from culture to culture; however, when nonverbal signals contradict verbal ones, the nonverbal signals are usually the ones to trust.

Nonverbal cues have six functions: complementing, accenting, contradicting, repeating, regulating, and substituting. In addition, nonverbal cues add redundancy to the verbal message and increase the probability that the verbal message will be understood as intended by the sender.

The study of movement includes gestures, posture, head movement, and walk. Gestures may include emblems, illustrators, affect displays, regulators, and adapters. The space around us and how we and others relate to it are also important. Four zones are presented and discussed in this chapter, but care must be taken in interpreting them because zones may differ among cultures. Inappropriate use of space may make a manager appear rude, while an accurate analysis of space indicates much about the importance of power in an organization.

Personal appearance is another integral part of the impression we give and often the key to credibility. Consequently, managers should pay close attention to their clothing, accessories, makeup, hairstyle, and grooming to be sure their appearance fits the expectations of the organization's culture and customers.

Voice is the final source of nonverbal signals discussed in the chapter. Vocal delivery includes the pitch, tone, onset, and duration of messages.

The first step to detecting deception is to establish a baseline. Once this has been accomplished, movement, dress, space, and voice can each be used to evaluate the potential for deception in an interaction. But in all managerial communication situations, it is important to remember that no dictionary exists for the meaning of nonverbal cues.

Cases for Small-Group Discussion

CASE 10-1

Jumping to Conclusions

Julie D'Souza was a recent hire of Mantle Data, Inc. She was distressed as she walked toward the office of her supervisor. She had experienced some strange interactions with one of her male coworkers and felt compelled to say something about it.

Dana Kilpatrick, her supervisor, had an open-door policy. Julie knocked on her door and said, "Do you have a few minutes?"

"Sure, Julie. Come on in," said Dana. "What's on your mind?"

"I think one of my coworkers is hitting on me, or something. It's Rick—when I pass him in the hallway he says, 'Whoa!,' and he turns his head and looks at my backside. Oh, and the other day, he growled at me in the lounge. And he clicks his tongue . . ." Julie added.

"OK, that is strange," Dana agreed. "Have you told him it makes you uncomfortable?"

"Well, no, I was hoping you could give me some advice about how to handle this. I've never had a guy act like this toward me before," Julie said.

“Let me talk to the divisional manager,” replied Dana. “He knows Rick, and I think he hired him years ago. I’ll see what he says.”

“OK, thank you,” Julie said as she left the office.

About two hours later, Dana met with the divisional manager, Rob Watkins. Rob cleared things up rather succinctly; he explained that Rick had a very mild form of Asperger’s syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder that is characterized by significant difficulties in social interaction and nonverbal communication, as well as restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior. Although Rick was categorized as high functioning (able to carry out typical requirements of living), he did retain some quirky behavioral traits, such as involuntary movements or sounds, and awkward social interactions. But Rick was also a very talented and efficient programmer and a valuable employee of the firm. Rob was certain that Rick was not hitting on Julie but that perhaps he did like her, and seeing her might trigger some behavior that may appear to be flirty, but it was more likely a by-product of the Asperger’s.

QUESTIONS

1. Do nonverbal communication principles apply in this case?
2. The US federal laws governing physical or mental impairments would apply in this case, since a medical diagnosis was present. What should Rick’s coworkers and managers know about his condition and how to interact with him?
3. What would you recommend to Julie if you were in Dana’s position?

CASE 10-2

Facing a Series of Interviews

Hanna Jenson recently applied for a position that involves supervising the work activities of a large comprehensive insurance company. She has just received a letter notifying her to report for an interview for this position in four days. The letter indicates Jenson will be required to attend a series of interviews as follows:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Rodney Custer, personnel manager |
| 10:00 a.m. | Ahmad Syed, department chief |
| 11:00 a.m. | Bobbie Kent, medical claims supervisor |

If Jenson gets the job, she will receive a substantial raise in salary as well as her first opportunity to gain supervisory experience. Therefore, she wants the job very badly and is concerned about how to prepare for each of the interviews.

Although she has never worked in this particular department, Jenson has worked for the company for several years. She knows Custer and Syed on a casual basis, but she has never met Kent. Custer is thirty-eight years old, meticulous in dress, and obviously very proud of the managerial accomplishments he

has made since he became personnel manager two years ago. Jenson's friends in the department believe Custer is sexist and tends to hire men in supervisory positions if possible.

Syed is an elderly, rotund gentleman who will be eligible for retirement in two years. He is somewhat unkempt in appearance, but his knowledge of policy and regulations has earned him the respect of managers throughout the company.

Jenson is especially concerned about the interview with Kent. If she gets the job, she will be working directly under Kent, yet she knows nothing about her.

QUESTIONS

1. What positive and negative suggestions would you give Jenson about her choice of dress for this interview?
2. What effective nonverbal signals would you suggest Jenson send during the interview, given the profiles of two of the individuals Jenson is to meet?
3. How could Jenson's strategy differ in each interview situation?

CASE 10-3

What Is Going on Here?

Art Margulis is the forty-five-year-old director of marketing research for a Fortune 500 consumer products company. He joined the firm nineteen years ago after he received his MBA with a marketing emphasis. Because of his technical expertise, management skills, and outgoing personality, he was made director of this fifty-person group four years ago. Six people report directly to him, but the management style is informal, so he frequently interacts with everyone in the department.

Two years ago, Margulis extensively recruited Maria Lopez, who had just completed her PhD in applied statistics. Margulis had a difficult time persuading her to join the company because she had many attractive offers. Although she was only thirty-four years old, she had outstanding experience in marketing research and a unique educational background. Lopez came in and quickly made a number of significant contributions to the department. As manager of statistical analysis, she reports directly to Margulis but has nobody reporting to her. Soon after joining the company, Lopez and her husband divorced. Many employees in the department believe her personal problems are why she has not been more sociable with other employees.

Lopez and Margulis have always gotten along well and often have lunch together to discuss various projects. They seem to have much in common as they both understand the advanced statistics used in the research. Recently, the conversations have turned more personal as Margulis went through a divorce and seems to be seeking more social support. In particular, he seems to miss his two teenage daughters and needs someone to talk to about it.

But Lopez sees a problem developing, and she recently talked to a human resource manager about it. She explained that she has a lot of respect for Margulis and enjoys visiting with him. But she notices a definite change in his behavior around her. The eye contact is more prolonged, and the personal physical

space between them is reduced. Lopez feels uneasy about it and has tried to subtly change the trend. However, this only intensified what Lopez saw as pressure to spend more time with Margulis. Today, Margulis asked Lopez to have dinner with him so they could talk over a project. It seems they have not had time to cover the project during working hours.

QUESTIONS

Discuss this case in terms of nonverbal behavior and other topics presented in this chapter. What are the implications of this situation?

Student Study Site

Visit the Student Study Site at study.sagepub.com/hynes6e for web quizzes, video links, web resources, and cases studies.

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