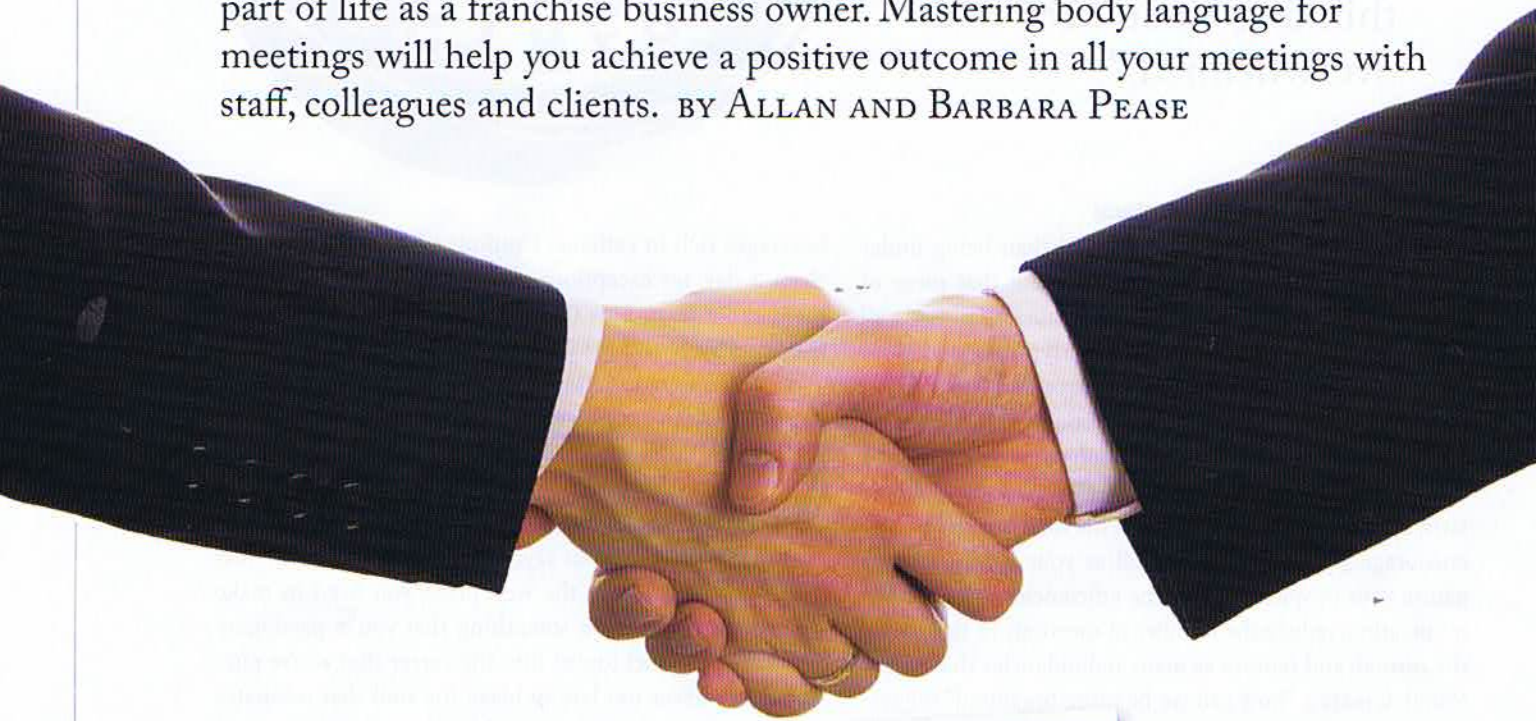




## Body Language in Franchising: Mastering Meetings

Whether you welcome meetings or see them as a chore, they are a necessary part of life as a franchise business owner. Mastering body language for meetings will help you achieve a positive outcome in all your meetings with staff, colleagues and clients. BY ALLAN AND BARBARA PEASE



**Y**our ability to read and decode body language is undoubtedly one of the best qualifications for a successful career in business. The nature of the franchise relationship can pose its own unique set of challenges and opportunities brought about by the way you and your franchisor communicate with each other.

We wanted to help in any way we can, so we looked to the best in the business.

In a series **exclusive** to *Franchise Buyer*, world renowned, best selling authors, Allan and Barbara Pease, share with you the techniques they have developed for success in sales and business.

They will show you how to use your own non-verbal cues and signals to communicate effectively with your franchisor field manager, your staff members, as well as suppliers and associates to get the reactions you want in any professional encounter. Allan and Barbara Pease are the most successful relationship authors in the business. They have written a total of 15 best-sellers, including nine number ones, and give seminars in up to 30 countries each year. Their books are available in over 100

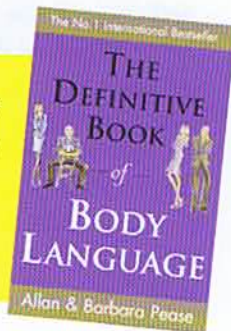


countries, are translated into 51 languages and have sold over 25 million copies.

Allan and Barbara appear regularly in the media worldwide, and their work has been the subject of nine television series, a stage play, and a number-one box-office movie that attracted a combined audience of over 100 million. Their company, Pease International Ltd, produces videos, training courses and seminars for business and governments worldwide.

We encourage you to read the full story in Allan and Barbara's latest book, *The Definitive Book of Body Language*.

For more information, visit [www.peaseinternational.com](http://www.peaseinternational.com)



There are two steps to mastering body language for meetings: learning how to interpret and respond to the body language of others, and learning to control your own body language to create a strong impression and a favourable outcome.

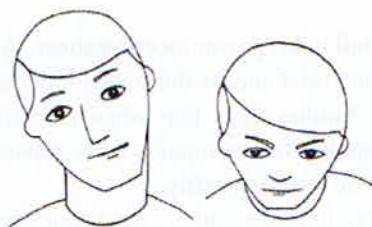
## 7 'musts' for your next meeting

Let's begin by focusing on your body language. Here are two simple ways you can convey confidence:

- **Convey power by the way you sit.** Sitting with your elbows on the armrest of a chair is a position of power and conveys a strong, upright image. Avoid letting your arms drop inside the arms of the chair, or you'll be perceived to be humble, defeated or fearful.
- **Keep your fingers together.** People who keep their fingers close when they gesture with their hands and keep their hands below chin level command the most attention and are deemed more powerful.

Now, let's combine these with five ways you can build rapport and trust:

- **Sit an appropriate distance from your colleague or client.** As a rule, you can move closer to familiar people but further back from new ones. Men generally move closer to women they work with, while women move further back from men.
- **Subtly mirror the other person,** including their seating position, posture, body angle, gestures, expressions and tone of voice. This is one of the most powerful ways to build rapport quickly. They'll start to feel that there's something about you they like and they'll be in a more receptive and relaxed frame of mind.
- **Nod your head** – it's a powerful persuasion tool. Slow nodding communicates that you are interested in what the speaker is saying, so give slow, deliberate clusters of three nods when the other person is making a point. Fast nodding tells the speaker you've heard enough, or that you want them to give you a turn to speak.
- **Head-tilt for trust.** Tilting your head when listening to others encourages their trust, as it makes you appear non-threatening and intuitive. Women should avoid tilting their head in meetings with men, however, as it makes them appear submissive.



A useful gesture for businessmen who want to appear non-threatening, but a no-no for businesswomen

- **Synchronise your speech.** Never speak at a faster rate than the other person, especially if you want them to absorb what you are saying. A person's speed of speech shows the rate at which their brain can continuously analyse information. Studies reveal they will feel pressured if you speak too quickly.

Synchronising your speech patterns with those of the other person (pacing) also helps to establish mutual attitudes and build rapport. As a business relationship grows over time – and you learn to read each other's non-verbal cues, vocal pacing replaces mirroring as the primary medium for maintaining rapport.

These seven 'musts' will take you a long way towards achieving the outcome you seek. Before you enter an important meeting, sit quietly for five minutes and visualise yourself doing these things and doing them well. You'll find your movement follows your thoughts, and others will react accordingly.

## Phone conferencing – it's all in the voice

When meeting by phone or Skype (without video), you won't be able to convince others of your confidence using visual cues. Here, your voice is your only way to create the impression you want, so be sure to use it well. Mind your intonation, voice inflection and rate of speech, and, if you are a woman, use a deeper voice to convey credibility and authority.

Take care to wait for pauses before speaking, which can be tricky if there is a delay. Also make it clear when you have finished speaking, by saying something like, "What are your thoughts on that?" This gives the other party an unmistakable cue to speak and shows you are leading the discussion.



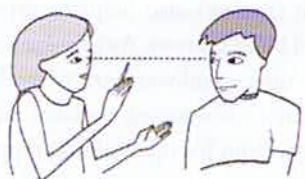
**TIP:** It's a good idea to stand when speaking on the phone, as your words will sound authoritative and you'll think more quickly.

## Be a good influence

Now let's look at three ways you can use your body language in a meeting to subtly influence the behaviour of others:

- **Stand tall to keep your meeting short.** Want to keep a meeting brief and to-the-point? Conduct it standing up. Studies show that when participants stand, meetings are shorter, input is more dynamic, and decisions are reached swiftly.

Standing when others enter your workspace also deters people from staying too long and distracting you with social chatter, so consider not having visitors' chairs in the area where you work.



The Power-Lift — using a pen to control where a person looks in a meeting

- **Command focus —with a pen!** This is a nifty trick we call the *power lift*. To focus a person's attention in a one-to-one meeting, use a pen to point to a visual aid, such as a graph or a laptop, while you verbalise what they see. Next, lift the pen and hold it at eye level between you. This will cause them to lift their head so they are looking directly at you, maximising their absorption of your message. Keep the palm of your other hand open while you are speaking.

- **Break down defences.** If you see that your listener's body language has become defensive — e.g. arm crossing, sitting back or leaning away — give them something to hold or do. Hand them a brochure or sample or ask them to look at a laptop, and they'll have to unfold their arms and lean forward, moving into a more open position and attitude.

**Read minds**

Your next challenge is to interpret the body language of others and respond if necessary to regain control of your meeting. Here are three clues you can't miss...

- **Coffee talks.** Want to read someone's mind? Offer them a coffee! If immediately after taking a drink they place their cup in front of their body, it's a sure sign they feel hesitant, unsure or negative about what they're hearing. If they place their cup to one side, this shows are open and receptive to the message and the person delivering it.



She's now open to your ideas      The arm barrier says, 'No.'

- **Legs don't lie!** While we can learn to lie effectively using our face and hands, we have less awareness of our legs and feet because they're further away from our brain. This means we can gauge what someone *really* thinks by what they're unconsciously doing with their legs and feet.
  - Feet and legs pointed to the nearest exit means they want to escape.
  - Repetitive tapping or making short jabs in the air with their foot means they're frustrated because they can't escape.
  - A dramatic increase in foot movements means they're probably lying.
  - Open or uncrossed legs show an open or dominant attitude.
  - Crossed legs show a closed attitude or uncertainty.
- **Ready to run.** If the other party really wants to escape, they'll also show it by leaning forward with both hands on both knees or with both hands gripping the chair as if about to start a race.



On your marks, get set in the starting blocks — change tack or this meeting is over

Remember, we humans are hardwired to move in the direction of what we want, and away from what we don't want. If you see that someone is itching to get away, you must either get them involved and interested, or terminate the meeting on your terms so you can maintain control. Knowing when to end a meeting is just as important as conducting it well.

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