



The slightest glance. An abrupt dashing out of the Zoom room. A horribly timed yawn. Our nonverbals are SO important and SO clear, even in our virtual meetings. I might even argue it can be more intimate to have your face so close to the screen than it is when sitting across a table in a face-to-face meeting! So, what signal are you sending? What are you communicating to your team? Pay attention to your smallest gestures this month.

Kristin

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ENHANCE TEAM COMMUNICATION THROUGH BODY LANGUAGE (EVEN VIRTUALLY)

I remember reading a very popular book about body language in the 1970s. If you crossed your arms in front, it meant you were being defensive. If you crossed your legs toward a person, it meant you were open and receptive to their ideas. And the list goes on. The idea was simple. “Read” common gestures and “interpret” them.

Kinesics, the science of non-verbal communication, has evolved beyond “you do this, it means that.” Body language complements our spoken language and provides the depth and feeling behind the words, both on a conscious and subconscious level. We act out our state of being with a wink of the eye for intimacy, the lift of the eyebrow for disbelief, a nod of the head to show agreement, a shrug of the shoulder for indifference, etc.

You can enhance your team communication through your body language both in-person AND virtually with these simple keys for success:

Consistency. What you say should be consistent with how you say it. You signal your intentions through your facial expressions, eye contact, physical touch, stance, posture, movement, gestures and closeness to the other person. We have all experienced the incongruency of someone saying “yes,” but shaking their head side to side, signaling “no.” It makes us confused and we are not sure what to believe — the yes, no, or something in between.

Awareness. Just as you are conscious of the words you are saying, be aware of what your body is saying. We typically don’t even notice the non-verbal messages we continually send to our fellow team members. As you become more conscious of your body language (especially on Zoom!), your words and actions will become more congruent.

Context. Examine what is going on in the environment around you. If your teammate has crossed her arms in front, it might be that she is cold, not defensive. A teammate rubbing

his eyes might mean that he is tired, Zoom fatigued, or just got a new pair of glasses! We typically try to “read between the lines” and make assumptions based on our own reactions and history (or what we read in some book). Test your assumptions before you leap to conclusions.

Try starting out your team meetings with a quick “check-in” — a word, phrase, or statement which allows team members to say what’s on their minds. It provides an opportunity to share with the team whatever might be keeping them from fully participating in the discussion. A check-in allows each team member to voice context-setting professional or personal issues which may be affecting team communication.

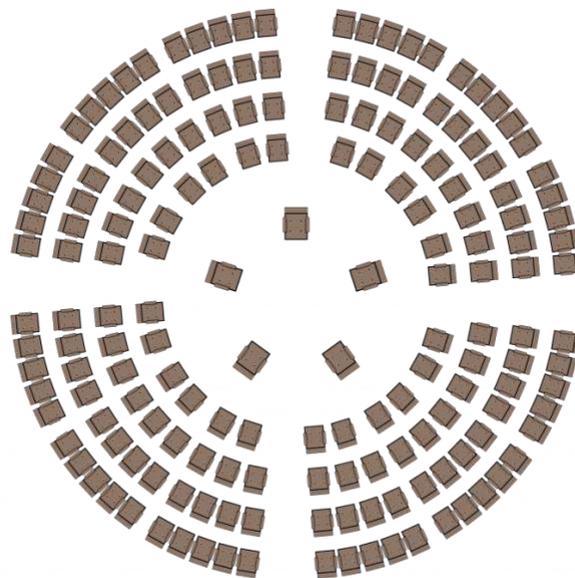
Variation. Everyone has a unique and predictable pattern of non-verbal communication: the way they sit, hold their arms, and listen to people. Watch for changes in others’ body language — a shift in posture, a sudden movement, an arm outstretched. Ask yourself: “What is causing this shift?” It may be a good indicator of readiness — to talk, to agree, to object, to intervene. It also may be that the person is tired of sitting and wants to stretch! Take advantage of these shifts and draw that person into the team’s work.

SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR A PANEL DISCUSSION IN THE ROUND

I recently put together this sample script for a panel discussion in the round, otherwise known as a “fishbowl” format. Thought it might be useful as you try this creative way to crowdsource ideas *beyond* 3-5 panel members!

Room Set:

- “The Stage” – Five chairs in a circle in the middle of the room – Three for pre-selected panelists and two “empty chairs” for those who want to share or ask a question. Each with a cordless handheld microphone on the chair. OR, three microphones to be shared.
- Moderator has a cordless handheld microphone.
- 40 audience chairs should be placed in a circle as close to the stage as possible, staggered so each person is looking *between* the heads of the two people sitting in front of them.



Sample Script for a Panel Discussion in the Round

BEFORE

1 hour prior – Moderator checks in with the many identified panelists. (Note: it is helpful to have identified people to “seed” the discussion.)

30 minutes prior – Moderator meet up in the room for room set, microphone, and a/v check. (Note: the meeting host put bags of Goldfish crackers on each chair!)

15 minutes prior – Mingle with the audience as they come into the room.

INTRODUCTION

0:00 Welcome and Share Purpose of the Panel and Process

- Thank you for coming to this session.
- While surveying our members a few months ago, we discovered new and exciting ways we streamlined, enhanced, and grew our businesses in 2021. The ideas were so good, that we wanted to share and ADD TO the ideas in a unique format (and new to our organization) called the “Fishbowl Format.”
- So our purpose here today is to create the space for sharing ideas and create a large group discussion where everyone in the audience is encouraged to get involved with questions, comments, ideas, or an “ah ha.”
- As a professional panel moderator, I’ll be guiding us through this process. We have a short period of time (only an hour) so we are going to break this into four distinct segments to cover: Wise Product Development, Creative Branding/Marketing, Smarter Financial Management, and Effective and Efficient Organizational/Operational Improvements. This is intended to be a fast-paced sharing of ideas along with the ability to clarify/ask questions at the same time!
- You might be wondering, how are we going to do this? The room is set up so different, with five chairs in the center and all of us are sitting in chairs that look at each other! Yep, that is quite deliberate – We’re all looking at the “stage” in the center, aka “The Fishbowl!”
 - We will start each topic with two or three panelists in the chair...and anyone who has something to share/add/question can come sit in an empty chair. *(Note to pre-selected panelists: When I mention the topic, start to move to the chairs. Don’t wait for me to call you up.)*
 - Once the empty chairs are full, if you want to share/add/ask a question, come to the circle and stand behind/put your hand on the shoulder of the person you would like to replace. That person, if they have already shared their idea, must vacate the chair. If a panelist believes they have shared what they can, they may vacate their chair and sit in the audience. *(Note to pre-selected panelists – feel free to contribute to any or all of the topics – not just your preselected topic!)*
 - The point is NOT to have a prolonged discussion about the idea, but to get all the ideas out on the table, so you can hunt each other down at the break for more information!
 - Once conversation seems to wane, I will start another topic.
- Sound good? Any questions on how we are going to do this?

0:05 TOPIC ONE: Wise Product Development (Beyond shifting/doubling down on virtual)

Let's start with our first topic, Wise Product Development. Who has some real world things you did in 2021 when it comes to product development, other than the obvious: we went digital! What, specifically did you do when it comes to product development?

- Panelist A – idea mentioned in the survey
- Panelist B – idea mentioned in the survey
- Panelist C – idea mentioned in the survey
- etc.

0:15 TOPIC TWO: Creative Marketing and Branding

Let's move onto our next topic, Creative marketing and branding, beyond "I used LinkedIn." Who has some real world things you did in 2021 when it comes to creative branding and marketing?

- Panelist D – idea mentioned in the survey
- Panelist E – idea mentioned in the survey
- Panelist F – idea mentioned in the survey
- etc.

0:30 TOPIC THREE: Smarter Financial Management

Let's move onto the third and sexiest topic, Smarter Financial Management. Who has some real world things you did in 2021 when it comes to managing the finances of the business better?

- Panelist G – idea mentioned in the survey
- Panelist H – idea mentioned in the survey
- Panelist I – idea mentioned in the survey
- etc.

0:40 TOPIC FOUR: Effective and Efficient Organizational Improvements

Let's move onto our last topic, and then we'll have a fun activity to close this panel. Let's talk about Effective and Efficient Organizational Improvements – Who has some real world things you did in 2021 that made the organization and/or operations run more smoothly?

- Panelist D – idea mentioned in the survey
- Panelist E – idea mentioned in the survey
- Panelist F – idea mentioned in the survey
- etc.

0:50 SEGMENT FIVE – Closing and Summary

- Wow! Check out all these ideas! We had quite a year – and perhaps you gained some inspiration for things you can do to continue to grow the business.
- We're close to the end of our time together. This time, let's play Musical Chairs! Our final question is this: "How are you leveraging your fellow members to support your business?" I'm going to play some music and the five people closest to the stage **MUST** sit down and answer the question! *Note to pre-selected panelists – it would be absolutely awesome if you came prepared to answer this question and sit in one of the chairs at some point!*
- Thank you! And don't forget to hunt down that panelist who had such a great idea that you wanted more time to chat! The general session reconvenes at 1pm in Salon 3. Have a great lunch!

FROM THE BOOKSHELF: CONVERTED: THE DATA DRIVEN WAY TO WIN CUSTOMERS' HEARTS

For many companies, digital marketing is a crapshoot. They drop dollars upon dollars in digital ads, retargeting campaigns, social campaigns, etc. to entice a visitor to buy. It's a "spray and pray" strategy that to me, as a curious consumer (with an MBA in Marketing!), seems like such a waste. There has to be a method to the madness!

Ah, young Padawan, Neil Hoyne, in his new book, "Converted: The Data-Driven Way to Win Customers' Hearts" provides the insight that only the chief data-guy at Google can share.

The book is split into three Parts: Conversations, Relationships, and Self-Improvement. In each, he provides very simple guidance on what to do and what not to do to create an online, digital relationship with customers that will provide value over the long run.

Note: He does NOT go into specific tools and doesn't even hawk Google to do this for you! Rather, he gives the process of what needs to be done in simple enough terms that you can use a spreadsheet! He says, "Understanding your customers isn't about capturing every nuance of their behavior...the fact is that the more information you try to gather, the more you miss, and the more you spend."

Here are some key nuggets:

- Start with small steps, a simple spreadsheet, small teams, swift action. The priority is simplicity. Start with data you're confident is accurate vs. clean up everything you have collected. Add more data as you go, but do it with purpose.
- Identify as many real names as you can – and make sure that name is tied between systems.
- Data doesn't tell you everything. You have to reach out and ask questions.
- Learn to recognize the signals/hints that are important – and learn what NOT to obsess over.
- All customers are not created equal. While personas and demographics are more familiar, behavioral characteristics are much more boring but more insightful. Look at what your customers are actually doing and buying through simple segmentation first, calculate the customer lifetime value (CLV).
- There are things you can do to make existing relationships a little more valuable, and some are actually costing you money. Beware of "averages" as you don't see the full story.
- Don't wait until someone cancels – identify a sign that tells you they are at risk.
- "Clicks" are outdated. Companies need to play a much longer game, becoming better at grabbing high-value customers and convincing them to stay.

I particularly enjoyed the final part of self-improvement, particularly Chapter 16: Try a Career in Politics – sage advice in navigating a decision that can be rooted in data, but fraught with other factors.

Finally, Hoyne exhorts the reader to "teach, to listen, to let others be curious about customer relationships and contribute their own ideas...join the process and support the transformation a business needs to make this [digital marketing] approach successful." Indeed, it is about curiosity, and Hoyne has offered a process to hone that curiosity.

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