

The Russian Dolls

Alastair Grant

We all negotiate all the time. At home, at work, even shopping at auction on the internet. We seek to get the best deal for ourselves. We often do not consciously think that we are negotiating until the stakes are high.

Gaining trust is not the same as being liked. Establishing rapport, being courteous and pleasant should be preferable to being abrasive and rude, but a negotiation is better played with a degree of self-control whilst where possible being open.

We can identify some common threads in all negotiations – the need to plan what we want to get and coping with resistance from the other party when our wishes do not coincide with theirs. But there are clear differences between short term one-off transactions and those where we have an ongoing relationship. Buying a car, a computer, a copier all have a short-term element in the relationship with the seller. We may never see



them again. But when it comes to winning an account, a contract, a long-term order then there is an extra element. On one hand we want good client relationships yet we want to get the best deal that we can. If by clever use of technique or coercion we win a good deal it may backfire as soon as the other party realise they have been conned into a poor deal.

And so to the three Russian dolls – who and what are they and what have they got to do with negotiating? Well, they as usual nest inside each other and in Russia called Matryoshka Dolls (yes something to do with matron). Together they are a metaphor for the skills of a good negotiator.

The Outer Doll – the Relater

The outer doll is about relationship and communication skills. This is about building trust, respect, finding out information, listening carefully.

We need to find out the wishes of the other party – who may also be reserved and cautious. And so we need to be skilled in finding out their objectives whilst not disclosing too early our innermost thoughts. Sometimes this leads to stale-mate as both sides dance around. You need to know what you can be upfront about and where you wish to hold off what might be a tradable concession.

The Middle Doll – the Processor

The middle doll is about process. There is a lot written on this subject. Of course you need to be clear what you want to get out of the negotiation. What is your start position? At what stage do you walk away? What do you consider are the objectives of the other party? Are there areas of concession where you can trade something of modest and acceptable cost to yourselves but of great value to the other party? We often produce comprehensive checklists for our clients to help

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The Russian dolls are coming...to a negotiation near you.

Alastair Grant opens the dolls one by one to reveal their secrets and how they together make up the good negotiator.

Is your Press Office online or behind the line?

Brenda Bates from Mainland PR, our guest writer this issue, suggests you need to take more notice of Mr and Mrs Noo Meeja, as that's where your customers are going.

Stephen Fry has the world's best voice – discuss.

Tim Farish examines what Stephen's got that the rest of us haven't, but, er, could have. Once we have, we'll be much more persuasive, and that's a promise.

"Twist and shout, like you did last summer":

Ewan Pearson encourages you to wave and smile and otherwise get yourself moving and grooving. But remember the voice and the words have to keep up.

The Russian Dolls

Advice squeezed straight from the experts



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them manage this in typical and repeated negotiations. Sound preparation by the middle doll can make all the difference between success and failure.

The Inner Doll – the Psychologist

The inner doll is about tactics and psychology. This is the area where a tough negotiator will weaken the other person's position through a number of techniques. A weak negotiator will reveal their hand too soon, concede too readily and/or lose their nerve. There are plenty of manipulative techniques. For example a sharp intake of breath or body language that says 'no' as the other party makes a key point which you do not wish to accept. It's called 'The Flinch'. Another is in response to a demand for a concession. You may feel able to make a concession but each step should include a sign of increasing resistance/reluctance, so make them small and ask for something in return, reducing the size of concessions each time. Negotiators need to understand the difference

between: "If you were prepared to consider that we might consider doing this" and "If you were to do this then we would do that".

Summary:

We think that co-ordinating the quite different skill sets inside the three dolls is as important as the individual skill sets looked at in isolation. This applies directly to those negotiations where you expect to maintain a long-term relationship. For example in the outer doll we try hard to establish a good relationship. Yet when it comes to tactics we may have to manage an area of confrontation. If we are still plugged into the outer doll mindset then we may concede too readily in the heat of the moment. We advise that before you go into the face-to-face negotiations try and visualise where you might concede too quickly or fail to ask for a concession. Work out your tactics using your head and do not be excessively influenced by your heart in the thick of things.

Is your Press Office online or behind the line?

Brenda Bates

Recent comments on "new media" from a fund manager, and his view that it was irrelevant to his business and his public relations in particular, caused me to raise a mental eyebrow and think about how I might change his mind. I could, I thought, begin by pointing out that although press still accounts for almost half of all media spend in the UK (45%) and internet advertising constitutes only 7% of total advertising spend (£19bn), it is forecast to grow 28% in 2007 overtaking spend on outdoor media in the process.

Then again I could just look at the size and growth of spend on so called "new media" by consumers and what this tells us. Consumers spend an average of £88 per month on communications and the way they are consuming media is also changing.

"So what?" I heard the fund manager say. "How is this affecting my business and my marketing? My

customers read the FT/Times/Telegraph; the internet is not really relevant for me." In this he may be a little bit right, for a little while longer, but even here the market is changing.

Firstly older people are certainly not afraid of, or averse to, new media. Research by Axa suggests that retired people in the UK are already online for an average six hours per week. Secondly, the broadsheet press are themselves integrating their online offerings much more actively and promoting themselves as multi media brands, and now Windows Vista comes with a selection of news channels pre-installed..

What I would accept is that financial services marketers are not under as much pressure to find the cutting edges of new media as their counterparts in the music and telephony industries. Those trying to reach 16-24 year olds are really having to raise their game – and instantly.

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If we are smart though, we will use this generational difference as an opportunity to learn our lessons in good time, rather than using it as a get-out clause.



Here are four key trends that are changing our ways of communicating and doing business

1. **Technology** is changing the balance of power between the institution and the individual. Witness the recent spat between banks and their customers with regard to so called "illegal" bank charges. So everyone needs to clear out the financial mumbo jumbo and write and speak more clearly.
2. **Community and connection** are key. The old world, where owning the channel guaranteed the revenue, is slipping away. Take TV for example. We no longer sit down to view communally in our millions; instead we choose the content we want from a range of sources, the internet, mobiles, PDAs or the TV. So we all need to get our stuff out via webcasts, podcasts, texts and blogs as well.
3. **Convenience and control:** An extension of the point above, this is essential from the customers' perspective and therefore central to business and marketing. Pages of tortuous prose sent through the post may still be necessary to satisfy regulators, but don't even think about calling it marketing. Marketing now has to be on many platforms, and always available, and readily changeable.
4. **Context** – making sense of things: In this world of unlimited information and delivery channels, navigators, advisors, commentators and brands

become increasingly important if we are not to drown in an ever growing morass of information. Who do you trust to help you choose or form an opinion? So brand spend is going to have to go up too.

So what do we do next?

Given all this, I hope even the dustiest sceptic might by now be getting a glimmer of why a simple single publication solution is no longer effective. The question is not whether to choose online, print or broadcast but rather how to use each channel to maximum effect. The Holy Grail is to grow and maintain relationships with these essential audiences, in a way that is convenient to them and helps them cut through rather than just adding to the constant barrage of information that is now so intense it has become a problem for them. Institutions become publishers become designers become broadcasters. For this, your ability to deliver clear and compelling messages is key.

And media relations?

The first people that need to be convinced of this are journalists. The only way to break an exclusive story first is to put it out online. Waiting for the print version to come out does not always make you first. Print publications are increasingly becoming the vehicle for news analysis and features. Journalists get two opportunities to write a good story, breaking it online and following up with more detailed analysis and feature treatment in print. Essentially online and print should be working in tandem more than they do currently.

If media publications are to maintain their value in the eyes of their consumers, they need to ask themselves three questions:

- What am I delivering to my community of readers and advertisers?
- How easy do I make it for them to use me?
- Is my brand an essential navigator and commentator for my customers?

As journalists embrace this change, the onus will be on public relations consultants and their clients to meet the new needs of their customers.

Based on an article by Brenda Bates, Senior Consultant, Mainland Public Relations

Advice squeezed straight from the experts



Like the sound of your own voice, do you?



Tim Farish

Let's begin with a question: what makes a voice persuasive? To most people it would seem impossible to measure. Amazingly, we can measure it.

The human voice is a powerful tool for persuasion, motivation and leadership. Yet all too often speakers come across as bland and uninspiring when in a business conversation. The reason the voice is so important is that it plays a key role in the 'peripheral' route to persuasion. There are two routes to persuasion; the 'central' route looks at the actual information presented and focuses on the logic of an argument, whereas the 'peripheral' route is the appeal to our emotions. Both routes are important, but depending on the situation the peripheral route can have a greater impact. This is principally because the voice encodes our emotions and plays an important part in persuading others. We can measure the voice using the following metrics, and each affects our powers of persuasion to different degrees.

Pitch Height – is the perceived fundamental frequency of a sound measured in Hertz (Hz).

Pitch modulation – is the number and size of ups and downs in pitch over a set time Hertz/second.

Loudness – the way the ear perceives the energy of sound through the air. Measured in Decibels (dB).

Pace – the rate of useful information, measured in syllables per second. This includes the speed of word delivery, the length of pauses, and the amount of non-sense speech.

Fluency – is measured by the absence of disfluencies e.g. repetition, hesitation, umms/errs, rephrasing ("I...I mean we"), non-functional words (e.g. "y'know"), and non-grammatical pauses. Generally speaking, anything over 12 disfluencies/minute is excessive.

The above metrics all contribute to how pleasant, credible, competent, dynamic and enthusiastic we sound. For example, the actor Stephen Fry shows great variety and range in how he uses his voice as measured by these metrics. He varies his pitch and uses a lot of modulation. He also regularly changes his loudness and varies his pace. Admittedly, we are not all as trained or skilful as Stephen Fry but there are certain things you can do to raise your game.

Here are some tips:

Pitch – try to modulate your pitch more as it adds emphasis and makes what we say sound much more interesting. It will also make you sound more dynamic.

Pace – don't change if you have a normal fluctuating style. Trying to slow down the rate of word delivery can flatten your personality. Instead, keep varying the pace and insert more pauses to allow the listener to digest the information you are putting across. Information is normally put over faster than the listener can receive because the rate at which ideas are delivered is too fast. Remember, larger pauses give people time to process more important information.



Loudness – try to vary this too. If you have a loud voice, then lowering your volume on key points can be a powerful and persuasive tool. Similarly, if you have a softer voice then making an effort to increase your loudness on key points is equally effective. But always vary it.

Finally, get the emotions right – it is amazing how many people get this wrong but it is so important that what you're saying matches the emotion of your voice. The simple advice is show that you mean what you're saying. So, for example, if you say you're 'excited' by an idea your voice needs to sound excited too! You need to look excited too; this is not always automatic.

Our Services

Grant Pearson Brown Consulting is a respected adviser. We enhance the performance of businesses, helping clients to excel in the use of the spoken word, improving the performance of individuals and teams. Over the long term our work improves the way a firm does business.

We coach and advise individuals to perform at their best in the toughest situations including: Presentations, New Business Pitches, Business Development, Negotiating, Media Interviews and Telephone Calls.

Our clients' needs are the only focus of our work; we listen to them and closely tailor our response to deliver first class coaching and advice. Through our own innovative culture we selectively pursue new ideas and approaches, continually hone our advice and create tools such as Voice Analysis, Prospect Relationship Management (PRM) and the GPB Virtual Classroom.

Advice squeezed straight from the experts



“Twist and shout, like you did last summer”

Ewan Pearson

Well, maybe not quite twist and shout, but how about move and groove? Body language is a mysterious topic, and we think a lot of rubbish is written and spoken about it. We hope and trust this does not just add to the pile, but gives you some sensible ideas and actions instead. In short, we think you should largely ignore your body language, as the best body language is generated sub-consciously in support of what you are saying. Unfortunately the worst body language is also generated subconsciously, so we can't just end the article here!

It's only when your body doesn't do the right thing that you need to do anything consciously about it. And what you do can then varies from a simple "Stop it!" through to removing the underlying causes, which are usually either nerves or excess emotional energy. Nerves can cause 'tells' such as self touching gestures, and excess energy can cause things like pen clicking and chair swivelling. Gordon Brown is full of self-touching tells, for example when speaking from script he is prone to continually tidy his papers at opposite corners.

Body Language means all the non-spoken aspects of how you communicate to others. So things like the way you move your arms and hands, how you sit and shake hands, and whether you fiddle with things like pens, rings, nails, or hair and even how you walk. But it also means what you do with your face, which ingeniously we decided to call 'face language'; we think this does not get nearly enough attention. And body language also covers how much supportive movement you make, which on average we think is not enough.

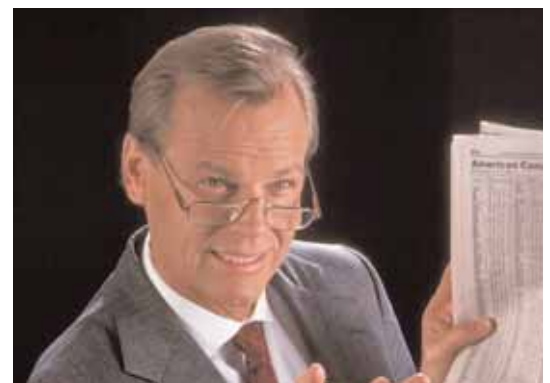
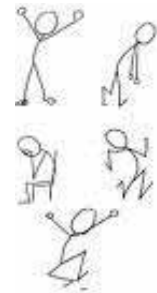
However good you think it may look, we don't think you should consciously engage in generated body language, as that would be artificial so not authentic. We think the conscious coaching of generated body language is wrong, yet many coach it. Clients that do it do look artificial. Politicians and broadcast journalists are the main culprits! For example, Tony Blair's conscious yet artificial body language includes his two-handed chop and thumb-to-index finger gestures. These have cost him credibility and integrity. Also those funny TV men and women who stand in front of cameras

holding imaginary balls they wave up and down (footballs and beach balls seem to be the favourites, just to clarify). Andrew Marr, the author, journalist and TV presenter here in the UK has been a breath of fresh air with his totally natural style, even if he is - unfairly - mimicked for his large waving movements. At least it's the real him.

We think you should not suppress but maximise your natural expressiveness, either with the body or more commonly with the face. Provided you don't whack the coffee cup on the table or the person sitting next to you, we think you should give your body full and free reign to express itself. There are very few cases of people with too much body language expression.

But it's the face that gets forgotten. "The face doesn't lie" and "The eyes are the window to the soul" are a bit deep 'n meaningful comments, but still they are right. What we notice mostly is faces that say 'bored' or 'miserable' or "I'm playing 'poker face', their voices usually match the face so often sound bored, but the words often contradict in saying 'happy' or 'excited'. This mismatch is a severe problem, especially as it's been shown that where there's a mismatch, the face is what we believe over the voice or words.

So what's GPB's advice? First of all, be natural with your face and body, don't consciously overlay something phoney as we'll all see it. Second, don't restrain bodily expression, let it go. Third, take the brake off your facial expressions; let your face and body do something, and very preferably something that matches what you're saying. Gordon Brown, Tony Blair and David Cameron are the subject of a related research project that we plan to publish later in the year.



Have a look at the two pictures and decide whether you think their body language is genuine or contrived, and if so, why. Let me know.