



Communication Culture

DO YOU HAVE THEM AT HELLO?

WHAT TO DO TO MAKE PEOPLE LIKE YOU, ASAP.

By Helena Kaufman, The Afro News Vancouver

DO YOU RECALL the movie scene where Tom Cruise, plays an ambitious, upstart sports agent, trying to impress a rather ordinary girl next door type played by Renée Zellweger? He is stopped dead in his stuttering tracks by her saying: “Stop. You had me at hello”

Those memorable words moved the romantic plot of ‘Jerry MaGuire’ yet that same critical ‘hello’ moment influences people in your own social and work life. It is what influences them to give you their time and attention—long enough to get your message across about yourself, or your product or service.

How much time have you got?

People determine whether they know, like, or trust you within a small window, milliseconds wide. The step beyond getting attention is attracting and keeping someone’s interest. It is said that our brain registers an impression in 1/20th of a second. It processes the data for another 1/5 of a second. We consciously formulate an opinion within 7 seconds.

Our new, modern human attention span then only allows us about 30 seconds to capture another’s interest and keep their attention.

It’s all about connection. To connect is a very human desire with many benefits. We want to be thought well of, want to feel good in the company of others. That personal security is hard wired in our original, primitive brain. That’s the part that is concerned purely with survival. It acts as the gatekeeper who instantly decides if we are safe with a person, if we like them and if they appeal to our most basic interests.

Knowing that 93% of our interaction involves non-verbal messages and only 7% are the actual words also confirms our need to first appeal to the most basic levels of safety and human self interest. Once people determine that they like us, they are more open to our messages.

Practice with real people

To summarize, it is best to step into an interaction with a positive attitude, to greet people sincerely, to shake hands confidently,

to make eye contact, to create rapport and to communicate clearly.

Each encounter, whether on the phone or in person, is an opportunity to practice your best techniques. February in particular brings you up close and personal with lots of people, known and new, at Chinese New Year, Valentine’s Day and various corporate and community events and campaigns. Put your heart into your communication and try out the full diversity of your skills. Tell me how you did!

VIP: Statistically, 2% of any group may never like or accept you-- for no known reason, to them or others. Stay positive and give your attention to the 98% open to getting to know you.

Next time-how to get people to like you moves from in person to on paper!

Helena is a business writing and conversation trainer. Contact: www.hospitalityambassador.com, www.helenakaufman.com, Twitter, Face Book @HelenaKaufman. www.theafronews.ca

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