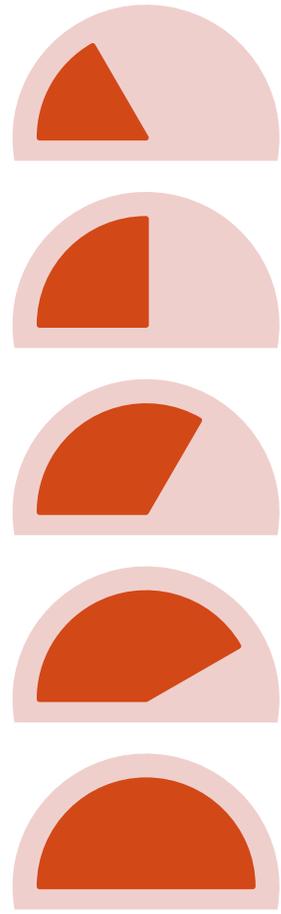


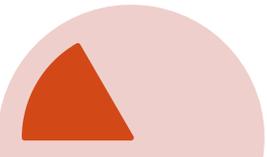
# Battle of the Sexes in Communications



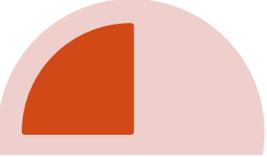
A Discussion-Based  
Best Practices Review  
by Kimberly Manchester



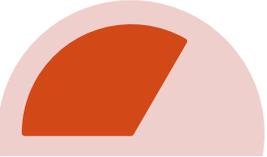
# Recognizing the Differences in How Men and Women Communicate



Purpose



Body Language



Paralanguage



Presence



Bridge Building

# Why Are You Talking?

Speaking in general...

**Men** talk in order to gain power or influence over a situation or over others. They speak:

- To direct
- To inform
- To negotiate in order to increase their power
  - To a man who already holds the power, negotiating is seen as a sign of weakness



# Why Are You Talking?

Speaking in general...

**Women** talk in order to build relationships, both business and personal. They speak:

- To learn or understand
- To encourage or compliment
- To find common ground
  - To a woman, equality can be achieved by stressing our similarities
  - Once equality is established, power can be achieved



# Why Are You Talking?

Speaking in general...

**Believe it or not**, men and women speak in similar amounts each day – approximately 16,000 words

Men and women use their words to communicate different topics

- Women talk about people and their interests
- Men talk about ideas and objects
  
- Example: A woman will ask if someone **enjoyed** an event; a man will ask about the person's new **iPhone**



# Watch Your (Body) Language

**Body language** is the use of facial expression, physical movement, and other **non-verbal cues** to communicate an emotional state

## Positive

Smiling  
Head Nodding\*  
Laughter  
Others...?

## Negative

Frowning  
Pursed Lips  
Eye-Rolling  
Others...?

## Neutral

Crossed Arms\*  
Eye-Contact\*  
Leaning  
Others...?

\*Surprise! This has a different meaning when a woman does it than when a man does it.



# Watch Your (Body) Language



While most body language is seen as having **universal** meaning, a few movements **differ in meaning** between the sexes

## Head-Nodding

- When a **man** nods his head, he is signaling agreement
- When a **woman** nods her head, she is signaling that she is listening – but she may not agree with what you are saying

# Watch Your (Body) Language

While most body language is seen as having **universal** meaning, a few movements **differ in meaning** between the sexes

## Crossed Arms

- When a **man** crosses his arms over his chest, he is signaling that he is closed off to what you are saying
- When a **woman** crosses her arms over her chest, she is signaling that you are being too aggressive



# Watch Your (Body) Language

While most body language is seen as having **universal** meaning, a few movements **differ in meaning** between the sexes

## Eye Contact

- When a **man** uses prolonged direct eye-contact, it is used as a challenge to power and position, to establish Alpha status
- When a **woman** uses prolonged direct eye-contact, it is to establish trust and develop a deeper personal connection



# Umm...Ah...Like...

**Paralanguage** is the use of **passive verbalizations** to communicate. It includes:

- Tone and pitch of voice (gentle, harsh, growling, squeaking)
- Volume (whispering, yelling, screaming in terror)
- Gesturing noises (hmmm, oh, uh-huh)

Paralanguage can **communicate** mood, expected behavior, or agreement

The technical term for paralanguage is “**nonlexical components**”



# Umm...Ah...Like...

**Filler words** such as “um”, “ah”, and the ubiquitous “like” are also nonlexical components.

These **nonlexical components** add nothing to the meaning of what is being communicated...but they DO communicate:

- Confusion
- Nervousness
- A pause in thought processes

**Nonlexical components** are often used subconsciously – the speaker doesn't even realize that he or she using them



# Umm...Ah...Like...

Who uses paralinguistics more? It depends on the situation

- In general, **women** use paralinguistics more than men simply because women use **verbal communication** more than men
- Women use filler words more than men
  - When a man pauses, he is done speaking
  - When a woman pauses, she is seeking to emphasize her point
    - This pause is often **misinterpreted**, and the woman is interrupted; thus the increase in filler words



# Umm...Ah...Like...

Who uses paralanguage more? It depends on the situation

- In general, **men** use paralanguage to convey agreement, interest, or understanding...without actually saying it
- Offering verbal **agreement** before the speaker is finished presenting can be seen as a transfer of power, especially in a business or sales negotiation



# Let's Get Physical...Space

Men and women also differ in their use of **physical space**

- Men take up more **physical room** than women because
  - They are usually of broader/larger build
  - It conveys **power** over the space
    - Men will sometimes splay their arms and legs to make themselves look larger
- Men prefer to talk **face-to-face**
- Men stand with fully erect **posture** to display **maximum** height
- **Touch** consists of handshakes, shoulder claps, and other displays of **physical strength**



# Let's Get Physical...Space

Men and women also differ in their use of **physical space**

- Women prefer to stand **side-by-side**, giving the appearance of **strength in numbers**
- Women are more likely to **shift their bodies** towards the speaker, rather than plant themselves in one spot
- Women are more likely to sit – which expands their hips – and use fluid **hand gestures** to indicate **familiarity** with, and control of, the space
- **Touch** consists of hugs, arm touches, and supportive gestures that result in the release of oxytocin (the “feel good” hormone)



# Bridging the Gap



The statements made in this presentation are *generalizations* – not everyone will fit the observed behavior patterns.

In order to improve communication between men and women, the following *tips* are offered:

# Bridging the Gap

Avoid falling victim to **stereotypes**

- Do not **assume** that someone is behaving a certain way because of their sex
- Do not attempt to model your **behavior** after how you think you should act. Be yourself
- Understand that not all behaviors say what they generally mean. Some people cross their arms because it's comfortable



# Bridging the Gap



Be aware of your behavioral response

- Humans act **instinctively**; we do not always **think** things through
  - Do not allow your **subconscious bias** or belief in stereotypes to direct how you communicate with the opposite sex

# Bridging the Gap



Be aware of the response to your behavior

- Not everyone will **respond** to you in the same way – don't take it personally
  - Some people **do not like** to be touched; others only allow people they are close with to touch them
  - Some people do not shake hands for **medical reasons** (arthritis, depressed immunity)

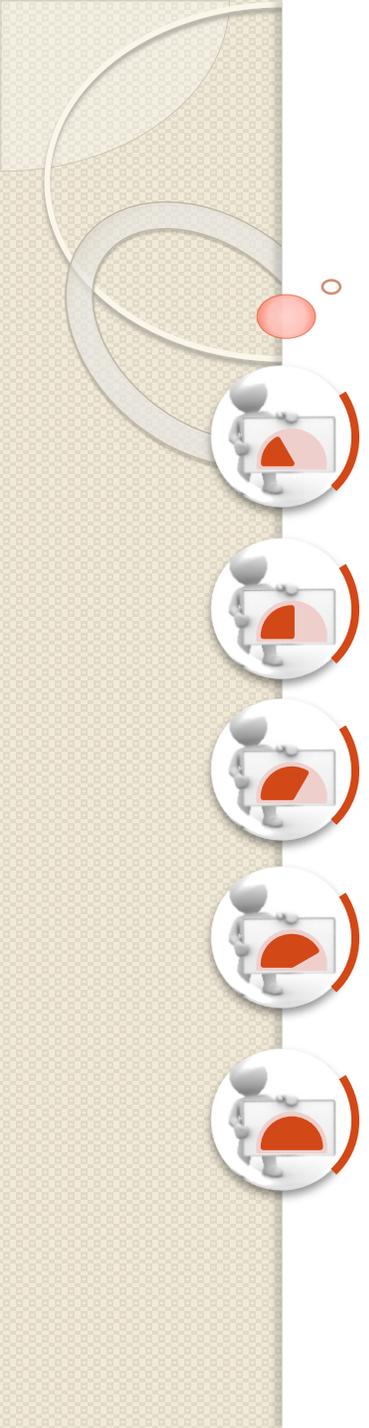
# Bridging the Gap



Be open to communications styles that differ from your own

- Not everyone is comfortable with interpersonal communication
  - Introverts are uncomfortable speaking with **domineering** personalities
  - Extroverts are not (usually) **flirting** with you
- Learn how others communicate, and try to adapt for the situation

# Summary



## Purpose

Speaking in general, men talk in order to gain power or influence over a situation, or over others; women talk in order to build relationships, both business and personal.

## Body Language

Body language is the use of facial expression, physical movement, and other non-verbal cues to communicate an emotional state. It can be positive, negative, or neutral. Some body language has a different meaning when a woman does it than when a man does it.

## Paralanguage

Paralanguage is the use of passive verbalizations to communicate. It can communicate mood, expected behavior, or agreement. The technical term for paralanguage is “nonlexical components”. Filler words are a type of paralanguage, and serve a purpose in communicating.

## Presence

While men and women differ in their use of physical space, both use their body to display dominance and control of the space.

## Bridge Building

Remember not to fall victim to stereotypes or bias. Do not take unexpected responses personally. Learn how others communicate and try to meet them halfway.



**Questions?**