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## How to Sell Yourself

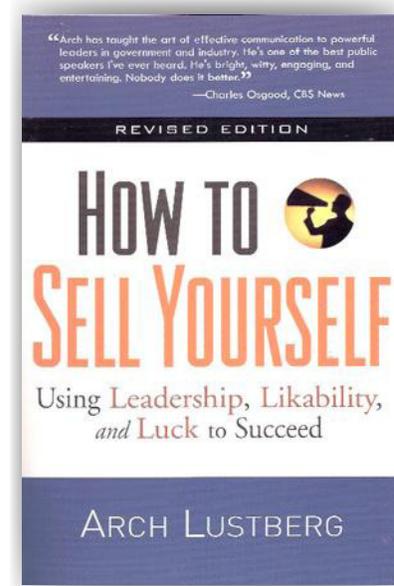
*Using Leadership, Likability,  
and Luck to Succeed*

Arch Lustberg

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*Reviewed by Albert Wang*

### INTRODUCTION

Nothing quite invokes feelings of anxiety and fear more in people than the idea of speaking before a group. Whether we are talking to reporters, standing before colleagues at a conference, or running a meeting, the very idea of saying anything in front of a group can be terrifying. Much of that fear stems from our own inexperience or forgetting that what we are trying to do when we speak is communicate. And in order to communicate successfully, you have to sell yourself as the speaker.

In **How To Sell Yourself**, Arch Lustberg teaches readers how to accomplish this seemingly insurmountable goal. We have all seen or can recall examples of poor communications in the form of long speeches that

drone on forever, college lectures that put students to sleep, and corporate CEOs who say “good morning” the same way they would say “I feel sick.” Everything you do when you communicate sends signals. Knowing how you send them and how your listeners receive them can significantly improve your chances for success.

#### THE BASICS OF SELLING YOURSELF

The three things we all need in order to successfully sell ourselves are competence, likeability, and luck. Arch Lustberg writes that though we may all believe we have these traits, it is the audience perception of the first two that usually makes or breaks a successful communication. Lustberg defines communication as (1) the transfer of information from mind to mind, (2)

an information transplant, and (3) an intellectual act of love. As in all forms of communication, the keys to appearing competent and being likable are not only in who we are, but also in how we present ourselves.

There are only four ways people can perceive you when they see you for the first time. (1) They can like you. (2) They can dislike you. (3) They can be neutral towards you. (4) They can feel sorry for you. The objective of communication should always be directed towards the people whose minds are not yet made up.

The first step to being perceived positively is to be yourself. This may sound obvious, but many speakers believe that they have to pretend to be someone else when they are speaking. You experience this all the time when you hear about the public versus private images of presidential candidates like Al Gore, Bob Dole, and George Bush, father and son. Relax and be yourself.

The second step is understanding that we each have, at our disposal, four communication tools to sell our competence: the mind, face, body, and voice. We organize our thoughts with our mind, and how we present these thoughts through our face, body, and voice determines how our audience views our competence and our likability. If we need a moment to think, take the time to pause instead of using useless catchwords and phrases like "uh," "as a matter of fact," or "to be perfectly honest." Look at the person you are speaking to. You do not have to look at them directly in the eye to maintain the perception that you are making eye contact. A person who keeps looking away or glancing at a watch or looking out the window gives the impression of someone who is shifty-eyed or does not want to be there. Finally, prepare what you are going to say and practice with a friend.

Your single goal as a communicator is to get your audience to like you. To that end, our facial expressions play a critical role to help or hinder us from that goal. If we look ill at ease, the audience will feel the same way about you. Smile only when it is appropriate to smile, when you genuinely feel like smiling. Smiling at inappropriate times can make an audience feel that you are false. Also when you are not smiling, maintain an open face, or caring face, as opposed to a closed face, that looks angry, or a neutral face, that

## KEY CONCEPTS

Arch Lustberg asserts that there are only four ways people can perceive you when they see you for the first time:

1. They can like you.
2. They can dislike you.
3. They can be neutral towards you.
4. They can feel sorry for you.

The object of communication should always be directed towards the people whose minds are not yet made up.

There are three things we all need in order to be able to sell ourselves:

1. **Competence**- Showing you have the ability to perform well is tied to how confident you appear. Fear and insecurity undermines your ability to appear competent.
2. **Likability**- In all situations where communication occurs, likability wins. No one votes for someone they dislike or takes advice from someone they do not trust.
3. **Luck**- It is not chance that determines your life. It is how you live your life with whatever cards were dealt to you.



Information about the author and subject:

[www.lustberg.net](http://www.lustberg.net)

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looks bored or uncaring. So remember, the smiling face is happy, the open face is warm, and your audience will respond in kind.

Our body language says a lot about us, but often we do not realize that the way we stand, sit, use our posture, or gesture also dramatically affects how we are perceived. Lustberg refers to the gesture as “the communicator’s equivalent of a hug or handshake.” Just as the open face says that you care, the gesture says that you share. So if the impression we want to leave is that of caring, there are four otherwise comfortable standing postures that must be avoided because they convey discomfort, awkwardness, and unfriendliness to an audience. These four postures are the fig-leaf, where the hands are placed in front of your crotch, the hands in the pocket, the military at-ease stance, and your arms folded rightly in front of you. The most comfortable looking position to an audience is actually the natural starting position. To determine this position, stand in front of a mirror, stand erect, shake out your shoulders and see where your hands fall.

Finally, how we say something can be as important as what we say. The voice is a musical instrument and our many inflections can confer emotions ranging from joy to anger to boredom. Just think of all the different ways you can say “good morning” and you

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Arch Lustberg** is one of America’s leading performance coaches. His client list is who’s who of business leaders, elected officials, association executives, and top professionals in every field. Prior to founding Arch Lustberg Communications, he directed the United States Chamber of Commerce Communicator Workshops. His specialities include coaching for media interviews; delivering presentations; testifying in court or legislative and regulatory hearings; campaigning for office, a job, or a promotion; and anything that involves memorably delivering your message.

realize that words do not reveal as much about the speaker as the voice that said it. But the spoken word rarely sends signals on its own. The author writes, “the face tells the voice what notes to hit. When the face is neutral, the voice is a dull monotone. When the face is closed, the voice is cold. When the face is open, the voice is at its best.”

However, knowing what to do and developing the confidence to do it in front of a group is not necessarily the same thing. Although stress is the communications killer, there is fortunately a way of transforming it into nervous energy and confidence. First, realize that you are there for the audience, not the other way around. What this means is that your focus should be outward on them, making sure they are with the program, not inward on you, worrying about how you look or what you are wearing.

*Communication is the transfer of information from one mind to another mind, or to a group of other minds.*

Second, conquer stress by diaphragmatic breathing, also known as natural breathing. The diaphragm is the dome-shaped arch located just below the ribcage, under the breastbone. When you are breathing properly, the diaphragm will flatten when you inhale. When you exhale the diaphragm returns to its arched position, pushing air up out of the lungs. This is different than chest breathing, which is what you do when the doctor asks you to take a deep breath and you suck in your gut, expand your rib cage, and tighten your neck muscles while the stethoscope is on your chest. That type of breathing is exactly the wrong kind of breathing and will make stress worse. Lustberg asserts that “incorrect breathing is one of the leading causes of loss of confidence.” What diaphragmatic breathing does is help slow down your metabolism, forcing tension out of your body, soothing you back into comfort and control.

Finally, putting all the basics together, we send signals to everyone we communicate with. The key to a successful communication is sending the right signals that can help an audience find you competent, confident, and likable. Lustberg recommends this standing position for maximum effect. (1) An erect posture sug-

gests authority. (2) Feet about shoulder-width apart suggest solidity. (3) One foot slightly forward allows you to move towards the audience as you gesture, giving a suggestion of warmth. (4) Hands at your sides look natural and comfortable. (5) Keeping your head erect with your chin up prevents the misperception you are talking down to or looking down at to your audience.

*More often than not, the spoken word gets only one chance.*

When sitting, Lustberg recommends the following technique. (1) Sit with your spine erect but not exaggerated. (2) Lean slightly forward. (3) Keep your knees together. (4) If you cross your legs, cross the top at a downward angle. Do not show the bottom of your shoe. (5) Have your hands in a comfortable position and free to gesture. (6) Keep your spine away from the back of the chair. Resist the temptation to slump. (7) If the chair has arms, your arms can rest on them, but do not let your hands dangle. Your hands may touch the chair's arms but do not clutch them. You can rest your hands on your thighs if you prefer. If you fold your hands on your lap, leave them loose and free to gesture.

Being a good communicator also means being a good listener. Even when you are not speaking, you are sending signals and the open face is the surest sign of interest, caring, and attentive listening. We often forget we are sending signals all the time. In a doctor-patient relationship it is called "bedside manner." Doctors are supposed to care and when they do not meet our expectations, we often think they have terrible bedside manner or are not very good doctors and very rarely remember what they told us. Situations like this illustrate the role the signals we send can have on our message. Wearing inappropriate clothing or jewelry for a business meeting, or sitting in a position that reveals too much skin are distractions that can destroy your message. "All the signals you send should be communication signals, not personal ones. Allow your audience to get what you intend to get: what's on your mind."

### SELLING YOURSELF AS A SPEAKER

Whether you are a professional speaker, a teacher, an expert witness, a salesperson, or just someone

required to speak in front of others at work or school, there are three factors to consider: (1) the logistics, (2) what to do, and (3) how to do it.

When considering the logistics there are several important things to consider. (1) Find out first why you have been asked to speak. (2) Once you know, find out what they want you to talk about. Do not agree to speak on any topic you do not know anything about. (3) Find out who the audience is. Tailor your speech to your audience. Nothing turns off audi-

ences more than canned speeches that do not apply to them. (4) How and where do you fit in the program of events? Find out if you are the only speaker, the opening speaker, or just one of many speakers. Ask questions about the program. (5) Is there a theme that you should adhere to? (6) When and where will you speak? (7) Who is your contact in case you run into problems or need questions answered. (8) How much time will you have? Knowing this will allow you to plan accordingly.

When you write your speech, write for the ear. Do not use jargon, legalese, or acronyms that can be considered insider language. Keep the language and the sentences simple and short. Conveying ideas in as few words as possible helps you get your point across faster and easier. Use stories to accomplish this. Relevant stories that people can identify with will amplify your point and make things memorable. And most importantly, if you do not have the time or knowledge to do a good job, do not accept the speaking assignment.

When considering the length of your speech, it may be wise to adapt it to the time of day. The attention span of your audience will vary if it is morning, afternoon, or night. Morning speeches should be limited to a maximum of 30 minutes if you are a dynamic speaker. Luncheons should not exceed 20 minutes and early evening or after dinner speeches should not be longer than 10 or 15 minutes. And be sure to inject as much energy as you can.

Finally when you are giving your speech, there is a technique Lustberg calls the "rhythm of eye contact" that he recommends using to better connect with your audience. (1) Your mouth should not be moving when

looking down or up, on a projected visual aid, or when you are looking at an inanimate object. (2) Use short sentences. Simplify your sentences so they do not exceed 2 lines of type. (3) Look at the audience as you deliver each sentence of your speech. Pause and look down in silence when you come to each period. See what the next thought or idea is. When the next thought is firmly in your mind, look up. Deliver the idea only when you are looking directly at the audience.

Hostile audiences are an unfortunately reality of life. Interviews by the press, city council meetings, and press conferences can more often than not become venues for confrontation and unfriendly questions. It is important in all of these situations not to be baited into answering an unfriendly, accusatory, or emotionally charged question immediately. Instead, Lustberg recommends to:

1. pause and think before you speak
2. stay calm and reasonable
3. do not get angry
4. refuse to take the attack personally
5. be positive
6. give information rather than denials
7. be explanatory without succumbing to the temptation to argue
8. take lots of time, thereby infuriating your opponent and making him or her look bad
9. be the voice of reason
10. be the good guy
11. make intellectual love to your audience.

Media interviews, whether for print or television, often conceal pitfalls. In all cases, it is a good idea to have a small tape recorder running for your own personal record of what you said. Things to watch out for include loaded questions with accusations stated or implied. The intent is to put you on the defensive rather than solicit information. Accusations in these questions should never be denied. Instead your tactic

should be to give information and never be negative. Other pitfalls to watch out for include the “what if” questions which are never deserving of an answer, the bank of questions with fast answers that builds to an unfriendly question hoping to catch you off guard, and the double edged question where none of the choices the reporter gives you are good choices. In all cases, if you do not want to see it in print or hear it on the airwaves, do not say it. Not even after the reporter says the interview is over.

*All spoken communication should be you presenting the real you; your warmest, most pleasant self. That's what the likability factor is all about.*

In all situations where communication occurs, likability wins. No one buys from someone they do not like. No one convicts someone they like. No one votes for someone they dislike. No one listens to or takes advice from someone they do not like or trust. Selling a product is not any different than selling yourself or your ideas. People like buying from, listening to, or learning from someone who is warm, sincere, open, enthusiastic, trustworthy, and positive.

#### SELLING YOURSELF ON THE HOT SEAT

Particularly stressful communication situations, like the job interview and testifying in court, can present unique challenges. There could be much riding them, and the outcome could be life changing. And often the stress can turn to desperation which in turn shows up in body language.

In a job interview, desperation is the deal killer and is usually caused by wrong impressions or beliefs about the interviewer and how he or she views the interviewee. Interviewers do not hold the totality of your future in their hands and are not supreme judges of your inherent worth or value. You are. To counteract this stress, the first step is to use diaphragmatic breathing. There are also many relaxation exercises available to you. Pick the ones that work for you. Second, use your face, your voice, and your body to gain control over the situation rather than letting your fears or the situation control you.

It is important to realize that (1) your worth and your value are in you. They have nothing to do with your

employment status. (2) Your interviewer is not intrinsically superior to you. They are human, like you, and they have a responsibility, like you. You may each have something the other needs and wants and the interview is there to see if they are compatible. Remember that you are also interviewing the interviewer about the job and the company so the communication that happens is a two way street. Finally (3) you are not just looking for a job. You are looking for the *right* job. Compatibility must be mutual, and the purpose of the interview is to determine if it is.

*The only people who matter are the folks who haven't made up their minds: the undecided. And how do you win them? By presenting yourself as a competent and likable person.*

Once the stress is under control, the key to putting your best foot forward is confidence. Confidence allows you to be friendly, open, interested, straightforward, and a good listener. You come across competent and poised and you will be calm enough to think rationally. This modest self-assurance is pleasant and attractive when compared to the insecurity, nervousness, or over-eagerness of other candidates. In the end, however, you should not want the job unless it is right for you, or if the employer does not have the right enthusiasm to hire you.

Testifying in a court of law, congress, or a local hearing on the other hand, requires a bit more finesse. Like the job interview, when you are asked a question, it is crucial that you think before you speak. And of course, whatever you do say should be the truth. So your job, in addition to telling the truth, is to be liked, because the jury will then believe you are telling the truth. The open face, the genuine and appropriate gesture, and the warm friendly voice are the tools that are most likely to help you bring a jury to your side.

On the stand, always pausing before answering every question, even the simple ones will prevent you from being intimidated or tricked into blurting out answers. Looking nervous or apprehensive can be interpreted as dishonesty. And when you speak, (1) do not elaborate, (2) do not volunteer information, and (3) always be brief and to the point.

For congressional and local hearings, be positive,

brief, simple, logical, use anecdotal accounts rather than statistical data, and give a concise statement of your position. Most importantly, remember the rules of confrontation. Always turn a negative question into a positive one, and, if you pause before you speak, your words will have even greater impact.

### SELLING YOUR LEADERSHIP

One of the biggest reasons people hate meetings is because they are badly run. Among the reasons they are poorly conducted include lack of control,

lack of preparation, rambling or boring presentations, indecisiveness, vagueness, disorganization, unclear objectives, lack of sensitivity to the needs and want of the

group, and running over time. The group at a meeting expects leadership, which means it is not about you but about the group.

Lustberg includes a 12 -step guide to make your next meeting a success:

1. If there is no important information to exchange, do not hold a meeting.
2. Help attendees be prepared.
3. Check the meeting site early.
4. Start you meetings on time.
5. Set the right tone.
6. Use an agenda to keep the group moving from one major point to the next.
7. Encourage participation.
8. Remember that our minds live in bodies, so break up long meetings with restroom visits, leg-stretching, and refreshments.
9. Watch for non-verbal signs of agreement, disagreement, physical discomfort, and boredom.
10. Beware of the signals you send when you whisper to your neighbor, look at your watch, or looking out the window.
11. Hone your presentation.
12. End on time. Meetings that run over can throw off your whole day. If you are nearing the end of the meeting time and issues remain unresolved,

dismiss the meeting.

When meetings involve negotiations, both sides should take time to express ideas and exchange information. As a confrontational form of communication, negotiations require both speaking and leadership skills. The author recommends breathing properly to relax and overcome stress. Speak with an open face and gestures to get your points across with honesty and conviction. Be prepared, confident, courteous and yourself. Search for common ground. Remember that the only successful negotiation is one that concludes with two winners. Look for solutions, not ways of being supreme.

The author defines leadership as the ability to get others to do what you want, need, or expect them to do, and walk away feeling good about doing it. The qualities of a good leader include being (1) likable, (2) trustworthy, (3) competent and experienced, (4) part of the team, (5) able and willing to participate, (6) ready to listen, (7) adaptable to change, (8) eager to share credit.

### THE LUCK FACTOR

There is no level playing field when it comes to life. Opportunities may or may not materialize when we most need them. Some people live their lives without accomplishments and then lament their disappointing situation because it is easier to blame bad karma, fate, or luck. The truth is that it is not chance that determines your life. It is how you live your life with whatever cards were dealt to you. Life is not without change and you can make the changes advantageous to you by recognizing the opportunities they may have or let it overwhelm you and paralyze you into inaction.

Lustberg defines luck as getting what you want, making it work for you, and becoming happy. Good luck then is finding gratification in what you get. Luck can be described as being in the right place at the right time. It can also be characterized as the moment when opportunity meets experience and preparedness. If you accept these both as true, then luck is more than just chance or fate. It is a part of life. And an important key to making sure things swing your way is to realize the importance being likable has on everyone you communicate with.



## FEATURES OF THE BOOK

**Reading Time:** 10-12 Hours, 245 Pages in Book

One of the best selling books in 1977, *The Book of Lists*, named "Speaking before a group" as number one of "The Fourteen Worst Human Fears." It is little wonder why so many people fear public speaking and why many more can recall being in an audience of a bad lecture or speech. Everything a speaker does sends signals to members of the audience. Where we gaze, the way we speak or gesture, and the inflection in our voice all cause the audience to reach certain conclusions and judgments about the speaker. For most people, the secrets of successfully communicating under these conditions are part of an enigma too difficult to unravel.

In **How To Sell Yourself**, author Arch Lustberg not only helps readers decrypt the mystery of how successful speaking works, but he empowers them to use leadership, likability, and luck to succeed in every speaking situation. Individuals are constantly sending signals through their actions. Consequently how something is said through voice, gestures, and eye contact is as important as what is said. This book is an excellent guide for teaching everyone the components of successful communication, explaining how actions could be misinterpreted and potentially harm communication. It also provides recommendations and exercises to reinforce corrective behavior and advice for success.

**How To Sell Yourself** is very well-written with real life pertinent examples that clearly illustrate important concepts and ideas. Chapters include photographs, where necessary, to demonstrate Lustberg's points, in addition to written descriptions. The use of anecdotes readers can relate to help bring the author's point home. The ideas covered in the book build on themselves chapter after chapter, fitting like a puzzle until the end when the concepts come together to produce a tangible whole. Exercises are also included to help readers master the techniques described by the author. The book also includes a thorough index and a summary handbook to highlight all the key concepts for readers looking for specific information, or

for those looking for a quick review before any speaking assignment.

The Appendix contains, in bulleted lists, Lustberg's views on communication basics broken down by concept and situation. For those individuals who have already read the book and just want a quick review of the author's view on the basic communications concepts, the appendix is the perfect reference.

Actors, corporate executives, reporters, and lawmakers are using **How To Sell Yourself** to improve their communication skills. For example, Former U.S. representative Richard Gephardt noted "The session with Arch was a great session, and I learned more in those two or three hours than I have learned in 15 years." Albert Martella, vice president of Merrill Lynch University, stated "Arch is the master communicator... Master the small details that Arch teaches and your communication skills should greatly benefit." Charles Osgood of CBS reported, "Arch has taught the art of effective communications to powerful leaders in government and industry. He's one of the best public speakers I've ever heard." Robert Dean, vice president, learning and development for Heidrick & Struggles raves "Arch Lustberg is a master at motivating people from every generation to improve their communications and presentations. Arch's techniques and tips are truly wisdom for the ages."

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### A NOTE TO OUR READERS

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