

## **JUNE 2001: YOUR BODY LANGUAGE SAYS SO MUCH!**



### **MONTHLY FEATURE COLUMN: YOUR BODY LANGUAGE SAYS SO MUCH!**

© 2001 Janelle M. Barlow, Ph.D.

I approached an airline counter at an airport this month. No one was ahead of me in the line, and two ticket agents stood talking to each other. One was at her station, and the other had stepped over to talk with her colleague. It looked like a friendly chat was taking place while they waited for customers.

As a result, I stepped up to the counter. One of the women held up her hand in that very welcoming "No, you're not allowed" style, and said, "I'm not open right now." She signaled me back to the line where I should wait for her.

I humbly walked back to my position at the head of what was now a growing line. Everyone in the line began actively talking about the level of service we were NOT being offered. It looked to all of us as if they were having a personal conversation, while we all stood waiting.

After some time, the woman who had walked away from her station to talk to her colleague beckoned me over to be "served." Not a word was said about what had just transpired.

I honestly think these two women had no clue as to what they communicated to their customers, all of us standing in the first-class high flyers line.

Did any of us speak up to say something about the situation? I know I didn't, and I doubt that the other five people in the line said anything either. After all, what would we say? The wait wasn't intolerable. No one was overtly rude. It's so difficult to say anything about body language unless it is blatantly hostile.

But if I were to say something it would be this: "You are responsible for everything your body language communicates." The women's body language in this case was saying, "You are an interruption to our personal conversation. Wait over there like a good little girl and just be grateful that we are here to help you when we feel good and ready to do so. And when you deal with us after such treatment, you had better be nice to us because we won't tolerate anything else."

I would be completely shocked to discover that these women actually feel this way. I seriously doubt their service level is as low as that. Nonetheless, that is what their body language was communicating, and five customers in line read it and commented on it.

What could they have done differently? For all I know, they were discussing some new procedure in ticketing that was critical for every passenger who they might next encounter. I doubt it, but it's possible. Here's what they could have said in that case: "Excuse me, I'll get right to you. I just have to finish this conversation about a new procedure we have. I don't want to make any mistakes with you."

If they were having a personal conversation and made five passengers wait in line, then that is intolerable, and these women either need a customer service refresher or a vacation. Someone once said, "You can't not communicate." In other words, we communicate all the time, and we are responsible for every aspect of what we present—even when we are not speaking.

### **WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING: TMI IS BUSY IN PARADISE!**

The land of warm days and clear nights definitely describes Las Vegas. We love it, even though most of us have been traveling this month.

TMI trainers have been conducting our follow-up programs for the Isle of Capri called Managing People First. In this series of half day programs, we cover the following topics: Managing a Service Culture, Delegation and Empowerment, Project and Time Management, Team Building, Team Member Retention, Performance Feedback, Leadership, and The Manager as Coach. The feedback so far has been tremendous in this effort that will take us almost a year to complete. The Isle of Capri is an organization that understands that corporate culture needs constant reinforcement and development and is the foundation on which success lies. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work with the Isle's thousands of team members whom we have taken into our hearts and to whom we give our absolute peak efforts!

Paul Holden, Peta Peter, Jossie Aguilar, and Bill Oden are doing the lion's share of this training, and it has kept them away from home most of the month. Peta Peter has also been continuing her work with Ketchum, the big public relations and communications firm with offices throughout the United States. Peta brings her public relations background to the foreground for our work with Ketchum.

Bill Oden has been on his feet this month as well with the Isle, and nearly on his backside as he attempted to dodge tornadoes that blew through Arkansas while Bill was traveling to Bossier City, Louisiana. Bill reports a milestone in one of his seminars: Youngest participant ever. She was fourteen months old. Mom had to be at work by 12 noon. So, Dad got her at about 11:45. She was a big hit. Dad had her fill out an evaluation form. She wrote a lot and all agreed after careful interpretation of her writing that she gave the course the highest rating, a "5."

Bill also has spent time starting work with Nextel on a consulting/training project that will unfold later in the year.

Jossie Aguilar worked for us in Blackhawk, Colorado, at the Isle of Capri and at Pompano Park Racing in Florida. We appreciate every minute of time Jossie is able to give us. She forms deep relationships with TMI clients, and she is able to do it in two languages.

**June, 2001**

Many people are bilingual. Jossie is truly bicultural, and that's a lot more difficult.

Janelle began the month in Northern California speaking on a panel for the Northern California chapter of the National Speaker's Association. Then she was off to Springfield, Ohio, where she had the privilege of working with KCI Konecranes for the second time. Konecranes is a Finnish company and they are committed to TMI's Employeeeeship concepts. Janelle then flew to Portugal where she delivered a full day Complaint Is a Gift program for a large group of motivated Portuguese. The hotel where the seminar was held was so beautiful it was a distraction! Janelle then returned to the United States stopping off in Miami where she spoke for the Unisys Financial Services Conference. This is her seventh presentation at a Unisys conference. Janelle finished up her month by speaking to a group of 160 Planned Parenthood clinic staff. All TMI speakers are honored to speak to groups of people who are hard working, committed, and dedicated. This doesn't adequately describe the staff of Planned Parenthood who offer a wide range of quality health services, reasonably priced, and frequently in the face of a high degree of social protest.

On the personal side, Janelle spent time with her family, celebrating her mother's 90th birthday. She only wishes to have the same mental facility as her mother does at age 90! Interestingly, Janelle's mother's entire first grade class is still all alive. Now, admittedly, there were only four of them, but nonetheless that's quite an achievement.

One final item. We have now received the Japanese version of Emotional Value -- at least we are told this is what it is. Our knowledge of Japanese is a little on the weak side.

#### OUR NEW ADDRESS:

TMI,US  
8270 West Charleston Blvd.  
Las Vegas, NV 89117-1219  
Tel: 702 939 1800  
Fax: 702 939 1804  
Our e-mail addresses and web page remain the same:  
TMI@tmius.com and www.tmius.com

REPRINT PERMISSION: TMI,US gives you permission to reprint this document for your own personal use or to distribute to others, so long as: (1) you include the copyright notice of Janelle M. Barlow, Ph.D., and TMI,US, and (2) you do not reprint in any type of written publication, such as a newsletter, article or book, or (3) you do not reproduce in any electronic document, including the World Wide Web. If you have any questions, please contact TMI,US at TmiUs@tmius.com. Thanks.

Copyright 2001. TMI,US.  
Copyright 2001. Janelle M. Barlow, Ph.D.