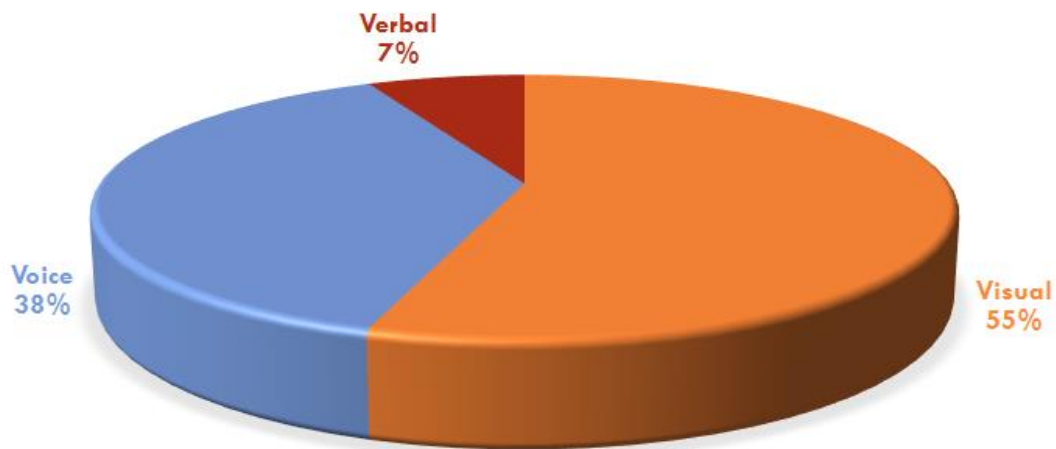


**You can control your non-verbal communication, and it is worth the effort because even small changes will help you appear (and feel) more confident.**

One popular theory on body language (The 7% rule) stems from Albert Mehrabian's research findings (1960's). 'Popular sources' state that these figures relate to the relative importance of the components of any message we communicate and receive:

- 55% of communication is visual (your body language)
- 38% of communication is your voice (tone, inflection, etc.)
- 7% is verbal (your words)



Of course, your words matter. How could they not? This interpretation is a convenient—*though not entirely accurate*—reminder that nonverbal communication has an important role to play. To be effective and persuasive in our verbal communication—in interviews, presentations, public speaking, or personal communication—it is vital that we complement our words with the right tone of voice, facial expression and appropriate body language.

**Slouching** communicates that you are bored, that you have no desire to be where you are. An interviewer will likely see this as disrespect. You should aim to sit and stand straight, with your chin up and your shoulders back.

**Clock-watching (or phone watching)** sends the message that you have better things to do. An interviewer will likely see this as disrespect, impatience or, worse, inflated ego.

**Fidgeting** (for example, playing with your hair or clicking a pen) signals that you are anxious, self-conscious, and distracted. Instead, lean slightly forward; towards the person who is speaking. This shows you are listening, are interested and confirms you are paying attention.

**Poor eye contact** could look like you have something to hide, lack confidence, are self-conscious and/or lack interest. **Intense eye contact** may be perceived as aggressive, or an attempt to dominate. Aim to be maintaining eye contact in a natural and friendly manner, i.e. with brief breaks and reconnections.

**Crossed Arms** form a “barrier”, suggesting that you are “closed” to what the other person is saying. Even if folding your arms feels comfortable, resist the urge to do so. You want people to see you as open-minded and interested in what they have to say. You are aiming for relaxed and natural.