

## Let's shake on it

The handshake gesture has been used by many cultures over the years and is depicted in Greek carving dating from the 5th century BC. The handshake is traditionally used by people around the planet as a gesture of greeting, departure, offering congratulations, or finalising a business transaction. In sports, a handshake after the game between opposing team members is considered good sportsmanship.

 By [John Boe](#) 8 Sep 2011

Is your handshake style helping you create rapport or sabotaging your sales and costing you thousands of dollars per year? What type of first impression are you projecting with your handshake style? Successful salespeople understand the importance of making a favorable first impression and know how to build instant rapport with direct eye contact, a pleasant smile, and a firm, palm-to-palm handshake.

An individual's handshake style conveys many important non-verbal messages such as; self-confidence, nervousness, and dominance level. For example, if your handshake style is too strong of a grip, you're judged by others as being overly aggressive, insensitive, and controlling. Conversely, if you have a weak or frail handshake style, you are perceived as a person who is easily intimidated and too wishy-washy.

Here are examples of the most common handshake styles.

### **Traditional**

The palm is slightly tilted back to show openness and receptivity. The grip pressure is firm with a palm-to-palm / web-to-web grip. Match the same grip pressure as you are receiving. This is the ideal handshake style to build rapport.

### **Controller or Dominator "palm-over-palm"**

The grip pressure is aggressive with a palm-over-palm, dominating grip style. This handshake is extremely aggressive and intimidating. If you are on the receiving end of this handshake, the best way to counteract it by moving your body slightly to your right. By moving your body slightly to your right, you automatically reposition your palm into the neutral position without having to physically overpower the other person.

### **Vice grip**

The grip pressure is excessive and very painful. This handshake is a show of power and lacks sensitivity. Typically, large men often underestimate their grip pressure strength and as a result, clamp down really hard.

### **Politician**

This is like a traditional grip, but with the left hand covering the person's right hand. The left hand may also move up the arm and touch the forearm, bicep, or shoulder. This handshake style is very informal and should only be used with co-workers, good friends, and family members. When salespeople use this informal handshake style, they are typically viewed as insincere, artificial, or phony.

### **Dead fish**

The grip pressure is zero, the fingers are limp, and the palm is damp. This submissive handshake style projects low self-esteem and can be extremely unpleasant for the person who's on the receiving end. If you're the type of person who gets sweaty palms, before you shake hands try wiping your palm on a napkin, the tablecloth, or your clothes.

*The handshake of the host affects the taste of the roast.* - Ben Franklin

## ABOUT JOHN BOE

American John Boe presents a wide variety of motivational and sales-oriented keynotes and seminar programs for sales meetings and conventions. John is a recognized sales trainer, business motivational speaker with an impeccable track record in the meeting industry. For more information, go to [www.johnboe.com](http://www.johnboe.com). Free newsletter available on website. [View my profile and articles...](#)

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