

# THE 30-MINUTE EMBA

Our 2006 guide  
to executive education

So, you've toiled for years in middle management, and though one day you'd like to snag that corner office, you fear you may have hit your ceiling. We can help. Reading our 30-minute EMBA won't open any doors for you, or give you the knowledge that one of Canada's executive MBA programs will (see our list of the best schools in Canada, starting on page 105). But we guarantee it will have you looking, and acting, like a world-class CEO.

BY DENISE BALKISSOON, OMAR EL AKKAD AND CRAIG SILVERMAN

## Rule No. 73

### Answer the damn question

The advice still given to most executives is to answer the question you *wanted* the media to ask, not the one they did. It's a strategy that enables well-trained spokespeople to plug their overrehearsed key messages even in the face of aggressive questioning. But **Richard Edelman**, president and CEO of Edelman Public Relations, has conceived a revolutionary concept: Ditch the pitch and answer the question; set employees free to tell the real corporate story. Your audiences will appreciate it.

"It's better than coming out like the Wizard of Oz, once every full moon, speaking the truth before withdrawing into your bunker," says Edelman, who believes there's nothing wrong with displaying a little passion, or even anger—it shows you're human. "You're not expected to be Superman, and you're more credible if you're not."

Better yet, why not send someone else to talk to the media? According to a global survey by Edelman PR, polished pronouncements from a CEO carry less weight than communications from an employee. "It is profound that an average employee is seen as being 50% more credible than an executive," says Edelman. "Smart companies recognize there can no longer simply be a CEO-only communications strategy."

The big surprise in the Edelman survey: Even bloggers are considered nearly as trustworthy as CEOs. With this in mind, Microsoft allowed almost 1,000 of its employees to blog on the company's website; Dell and GM, too, have permitted groups of managers and execs to carry the company flag on the Web. The days of the "hero CEO" are gone, Edelman says. "It's a team game, and you've got to empower other members to talk."

**According to prime-time television, you are 21 times more likely to be kidnapped or murdered at the hands of a businessperson than at the whim of a Mafia don.**

—From a recent report by the Media Research Centre, a conservative U.S. watchdog group

## Rule No. 74

### Define your style, but save the Reeboks for the gym

Many great leaders have had wardrobes that mirrored their success. But some execs go the extra step in defining their image. When it works, it really works. Bad outfits, however, can drag you and your business down. So before you decide to bring back spats, try matching the exec to his signature piece of clothing. You decide which ones work.

#### THE EXECUTIVES

- |                     |                   |                   |                       |                   |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| (1)<br>Donald Trump | (2)<br>Jean Coutu | (3)<br>Bill Gates | (4)<br>David Peterson | (5)<br>Steve Jobs | (6)<br>Jim Pattison | (7)<br>Peter Munk |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|

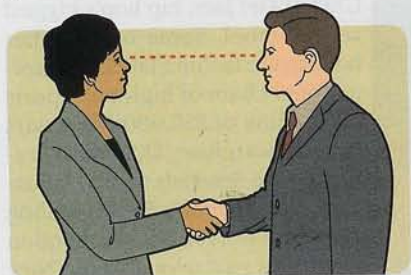


- |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| (A) | (B) | (C) | (D) | (E) | (F) | (G) |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

(Answers: 1-e, 2-f, 3-g, 4-b, 5-a, 6-c, 7-d)

The only person allowed to give a little tickle with his handshake is your grandfather

Experts estimate that between 80% and 90% of all communication is non-verbal. We asked **David Givens**, director of the Centre for Nonverbal Studies in Spokane, Washington, to help us master the most essential North American business gesture: the handshake.



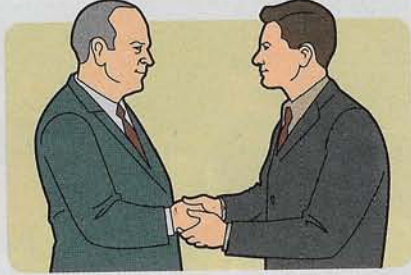
**THE BASIC HANDSHAKE**

**101** Reach out with your right hand, gripping the other person's palm. Squeeze and proceed with a swift up-and-down motion (one or two pumps only). Release.

**Advanced class** "The best of all possible handshakes is where you take a reading as you are doing it," says Givens. "Use your hand and fingers as tactile antennae to pick up messages regarding firmness and how long to grip."

**Use it** Any time.

**Warm it up** "Cold hands betray anxiety," says Givens. Make eye contact and lose the death grip, GI Joe.



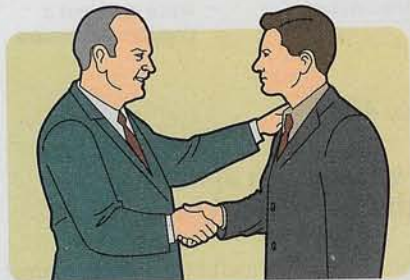
**THE TWO-HANDED SHAKE**

**101** Execute the basic handshake, but add your free hand on top, enveloping your partner's hand in a warm embrace.

**Advanced class** "If, for example, you're at a business awards ceremony and a colleague wins, you can do the two-handed shake to show your true emotion. Outside of that—even closing a business deal—it would be a little strange," Givens says.

**Use it** Sparingly.

**Dry out** "It's something you see a lot when people have been drinking."



**THE SHAKE-AND-GRAB**

**101** A basic handshake in which the free hand is used to give the other person's shoulder or arm a (hopefully) light squeeze.

**Advanced class** "This can show who the dominant person is. It's okay for a boss to put a hand on an underling's shoulder," says Givens, "but it's not okay for an underling to reciprocate."

**Use it** With someone familiar, and only on occasions of significance.

**Pad it down** Givens believes men are more comfortable receiving this than are women, in part because of the protection a man's suit offers. "That shoulder padding is there for a reason—to mask movements that show weakness and to offer a feeling of protection."



**THE HIP-HOP HUG (A.K.A POUND HUG OR MAN HUG)**

**101** A handshake, often gripped at the thumbs or fingertips, with a motion that brings the shakers together at the shoulders. Finish with a one-arm hug.

**Advanced class** Make it smooth and quick. (Pat the back once and get out of there.) No lingering embraces.

**Use it** On weekends, if you must. This is a mano-a-mano greeting that has no place in a business setting. "I'd expect to see it between equals, but not with the boss," Givens says.

**Wait it out** "In the future, with Gen X and Y filling more power positions, I wouldn't be surprised if it crept into more formal meetings."

## Never call a meeting without an agenda (and we don't mean the nefarious kind)

Everyone says meetings are hell, yet we continue to run awful ones. Even worse: They're getting longer. According to a study by the Institute for Business Technology, Canadians spent an average of 6.1 hours per week in meetings, up from 5.7 in 1997. **Ann Searles**, president of IBT, offers four steps to running more productive, less stultifying meetings.

**No agenda, no attenda** *Produce an agenda and send it out ahead of time. Politely respond to meeting requests by saying you will be happy to come as soon as you can see the agenda.*

**Ditch the BlackBerry** *Rude technology use in meetings is a big issue. Turn off anything that beeps, blinks or distracts. If you're there, be there.*

**No tourists** *Only invite people who need to be there. The fewer people you have, the faster the meeting can be.*

**Be ambitious about length** *If we really try, a lot of meetings can be conducted in about five minutes. And we can do most of what we need to in less than 55 minutes. An executive once complained that people were getting fidgety in his meetings. I told him, "It's because you serve coffee and bran muffins and have no bathroom breaks."*



## Rule No. 268

### Even Tiger Woods needs a coach

After more than 25 years working at IBM, **Wayne Scott** left Big Blue during the dot-com boom to join a tech start-up. Before long, his office was filled with colleagues seeking advice and guidance on their careers and responsibilities. The company flamed out six years ago, but Scott realized his future was as an executive coach. He launched Action Strategies Inc., and has since worked with executives at the Bank of Montreal, TD Bank and Investors Group. Here, Scott offers insights on this growing (but often nebulous) profession.

#### What's your elevator pitch for executive coaching?

Coaching is a one-to-one relationship that's all about the person being coached. There is no other agenda than the client's success, which is something that cannot be said of any other business relationship.

#### Can anyone just hang out a shingle and call herself a coach?

That's the reality, and I think it may be a problem for the reputation of coaching as a practice. There are no barriers to entry, and there's probably a wide variety of quality and value in coaching right now.

#### How do you know if you need a coach?

I start from the premise that we can all benefit from good coaching. But one really important trigger is when an executive is operating in a new role. Mid-level managers require coaching when they are identified as people

with significant potential and their employer wants to accelerate their development. At the top level, it changes to more of a sounding board. CEOs are experts in their field, but they are very much alone at the top.

#### What kinds of things do you work on?

We all carry untapped potential that is blocked by blind spots and habits. One thing we work on is self-management. How well are you managing your time and what's expected of you? Another dimension is how well you are managing relationships with others.

#### So how do you pick a coach?

I'd want to find out what they're bringing in terms of training and credentials, and if they have other clients I could talk to. It's also important that you're comfortable with the person. If you're not comfortable working with them, it's going to severely limit the effectiveness of the coaching.

## Rule No. 269

### Vague, verbose oration only works for Alan Greenspan (and he's unemployed)

Business communication is too often packed with clumsy acronyms and jarring jargon. Please jettison these awful terms from your vocabulary.

PHRASE	AS IN	BANNED BECAUSE	REPLACE WITH
Go ahead	"I'm going to go ahead and send you an e-mail..."	It's superfluous (and your employees will make fun of you behind your back).	"I will send you an e-mail."
Leverage	"How can we leverage this relationship?"	It's overused to the point of having no leverage of its own.	"How can we make the most of this relationship?"
Bandwidth	"My team doesn't have the bandwidth for this initiative."	We're people, not network nodes. Lock this one in the server room.	"My team doesn't have the time or resources for this initiative."
Core competency	"This fits with our core competency."	It sounds like it belongs on <i>Star Trek</i> , as in, "Captain, our core competency is too high!"	"This fits with our strength."