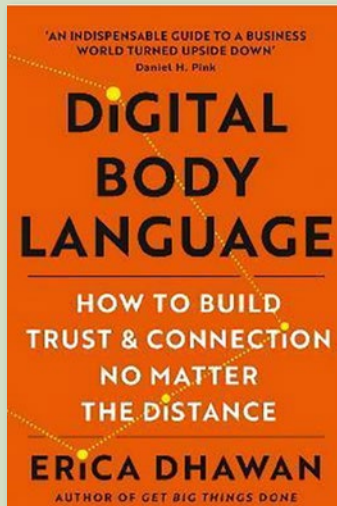




Mark Scheurwater
MSc
is director at the
Enterprise Solutions
unit of KPMG.



Book review

Digital Body Language – Erica Dhawan

For this edition, we have taken a slightly different approach. Instead of reviewing a book with a more technical related theme, we thought it would also be interesting to take one step back and review a book that dives into (personal) communication within the digital world, because without clear communication there is no cooperation within the digital world!

Therefore, we chose the book *Digital Body Language* by Erica Dhawan. Erica explains the importance of carefully taking into account how digitalization is also our way of communicating and collaborating (and that this is definitely not all for the better).

She sets the scene by first explaining the difference between traditional and digital body language; traditional body language is clearly visible and physically recognizable, while digital body language contains one or another form of digital medium (e.g. mail or video confidence).

She further explains the four laws of digital body language (hereafter: DBL) in detail, namely Value Visibly,

Communicate Carefully, Collaborate Confidently and Trust Totally and the challenge to apply these laws in a digital world. This is even more challenging when gender, generation and culture come into play, as these components are definitely also affecting and driving the way we communicate. To support the theoretical outline in the body of the book, she concludes the book with an appendix outlining various practical tips and tricks.

This book contains a lot of practical examples, making it an easy read for everybody. What I really like was the explanation of the “Trust & Power matrix” and how these two important dimensions are impacting everybody’s DBL (for example: when people have a more powerful position combined with a well-developed trust position, they are in the position to apply a more “lean and mean” communication style than people who have more power, but cannot rely on such a strong trust position). Personally, I think the large number of examples is also the downside of this book. The examples presented are in most cases simple, which is helpful to set the scene and increase awareness. However, more complex examples would definitely be helpful to get a good understanding of DBL. In summary, this book is a nice refresher, as most people do not take sufficient time to reflect on their communication style. Therefore, we should fully endorse Dhawan’s conclusion that in a world where most information is shared virtually, the DBL is reshaping our physical body language.

Dhawan, E. (2021). *Digital Body Language: How to Build Trust and Connection, No Matter the Distance*. St. Martin’s Press (ISBN: 9781250246523).

About the author

Mark Scheurwater MSc is director at the Enterprise Solutions unit of KPMG. This unit supports organizations throughout the entire journey of implementing an ERP solution (starting with the strategy phase up to the actual implementation and support of these ERP solutions). With more than 20 years in the ERP (cloud) domain, Mark has gained strong expertise in this domain allowing him to act as a trusted advisor for multiple clients.