

Etc. The Office Lab

Coffee Kinesiology

As you wait for your venti soy misto, think about the image you're projecting

By Tim Murphy

In another effort to boost quality, Starbucks confirmed earlier this month that its baristas would soon be preparing fewer drinks simultaneously. The news sent shock and fear throughout white-collar culture—longer lines are coming to a world in which queuing up at Starbucks is already a daily ritual.

Waiting for coffee isn't merely a hassle: It's a revealing pastime. "When we go in a Starbucks, we're in charge," says Patti Wood, author of *Success Signals: A Guide to Reading Body Language*. "Our \$5.50 makes us kings and queens of our destiny." As a result, Starbucks lines often showcase postures of excitement, Wood says. A coffee break is also a "transition from one focal point of professionalism to another," says Tonya Reiman, author of *The Power of Body Language*.

Just how professional? About 2 percent of the more than 11,000 Starbucks stores are in Manhattan—and one proved a perfect laboratory for *Bloomberg Businessweek* to study hundreds of people on a weekday. What follows is a taxonomy of the 10 most common Starbucks waiting-line stances, as analyzed by a panel of behavioral experts: Wood; Reiman; Marilyn Puder-York, author of *The Office Survival Guide*; Don Norman, author of *Living with Complexity*; and Dario Maestriperi, author of the forthcoming *The Biology of Everyday Life*. Next time, don't forget the tip jar. We're watching you. **B**

38% (of people observed)

The Awkward BlackBerryer

BlackBerry junkies feel "awkwardness or emptiness when they're not digitally connected," says Wood. They send business e-mails when it would be better to take a break and "do their deep breathing," says Puder-York.

5%

The Muzak Swayer

Some queue-huggers unconsciously rock to Starbucks' adult contemporary playlists featuring artists like Sarah McLachlan. "It goes back to how we were swayed in the womb," says Wood. Maestriperi notes: "Some people don't get fat because they're constantly moving."



9%

The Refiller

In addition to clutching empty cups, cheapskates seeking refills often bob their heads and tap their feet. "That reminds me of, 'Please sir, I want some more' from *Oliver Twist*," says Wood. "These people are charged up, and if others don't mirror their speed, they'll be agitated."

3%

The Primper

Some female line-waiters toss their hair and check their makeup. They also tend to wear the highest heels. "They're showing their wares and saying, 'Appreciate the fact that I am a young, attractive female,'" says Wood. "It's a very feminine thing to do," says Maestriperi.

Other Noticeable, Yet Less Common Starbucks Line Behavior Traits ▶ FACE SELF-MASSAGERS / Wood: "are, exposing many of your private actions and thoughts." ▶ CASHIER FOOT-POINTERS / Wood: "Where your feet point, your

106

