

Developing a professional presence essay



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Professional presence Professional presence is a dynamic blend of poise, self confidence, control, and style that empowers us to be able to command respect in any situation. Once acquired, it permits us to project a confidence that others can quickly perceive the first time they meet us. The importance of making a good first impression A positive first impression can be thought of as the first step in building a long-term relationship. The Primary Effect The development of professional presence begins with a full-appreciation of the first impression.

The tendency to form and retain impressions quickly at the time of an initial meeting illustrates what social psychologist call a primacy effect in the way people perceive one another. The general principle is that initial information tends to carry more weight than information received later. First impressions establish the mental framework within which a person is viewed, and information acquired later is often ignored or reinterpreted to coincide with this framework. The First Few Seconds When two people meet, their potential for building a relationship can be affected by many factors.

Within a few moments, one person or the other may feel threatened, offended or bored. Assumptions versus Facts The impressions you form of another person during the initial contact is made up both assumptions and facts. Most people tend rely more heavily on assumption during the initial meeting. If job applicants sit slumped in the chair, head bowed and shoulder slack, you might assume the person is not very interested in the position. If the postal clerk fails to make eye contact during the transaction and does not express appreciation for your purchase, you may assume this person treats everyone with indifference.

Cultural Influence Cultural influences often formed during the early years of our life, lead us to have impressions of some people even before we meet them. People often develop stereotypes of entire groups. Although differences between cultures are often subtle, they can lead to uncomfortable situations. Many American companies are attempting to create a new kind of workplace where cultural and ethnic differences are treated as assets, not annoyances. Yet some employees feel pressure to conform to dress and grooming standards that their employers consider “mainstream”

The Image You Project

Image is a term used to describe how other people feel about you. In every business or social setting, your behaviors and appearance communicate a mental picture that others observe and remember. This picture determines how they react to you. Think of image as a tool that can reveal your inherent qualities, your competence, your attitudes, and your leadership potential. If you wish to communicate your professional capabilities and create your own brand, begin by scrutinizing your attitudes; only then can you invest the time and energy needed to refine and enhance your personal image.

The image you project is very much formed by variety of factors such as below :

- * Voice quality
- * Handshake
- * Surface language
- * Entrance and Carriage
- * Facial expression
- * Versatility
- * Self-confidence
- * Integrity
- * Competence
- * Manners
- * Dressing and Grooming
- * Positive attitude

Surface Language Many of the assumptions we develop regarding other people are based on surface language, a pattern of immediate impression conveyed by what we see – in other words, by appearance. The clothing you wear, your

hairstyle, the fragrances you use, and the jewelry you display all combine to make a statement about you to others.

Bixler suggests that those making career wardrobe decisions should keep in mind that three things haven't changed: If you want the job, you have to look the part. Establish personal dress and grooming standards appropriate for the organization where you wish to work. Before you apply for a job, try to find out what the workers there are wearing. If in doubt, dress conservatively. Casual dress can convey indifference. If you want the promotion, you have to look promotable. A good rule to follow is to dress for the job you want, not the job you have.

If you are currently a bank teller and want to become a branch manager, identify the successful branch managers and emulate their manner of dress. If you want respect, you have to dress as well as or better than your industry standards. One would expect to find conservative dress standards in banking, insurance, accounting, and law, and more casual dress standards in advertising, sports entertainment and agriculture. Spend time researching the dress and grooming standards in the industry in which you hope to find a job.

Selecting Your Career Apparel

Companies that have initiated extensive career apparel programs rely on uniforms to project an image of consistent quality, good services and uniqueness. For example, men's worker rules include no beard, and dress shirts with coordinated ties. Female employee rules include skirt length (must not be shorter than two inches above the knee), and also stockings. The company requires employees to follow the rules in order to maintain the

personal appearance and grooming standards give it a marketing advantage. The uniform worn by employees by clerk, and the employees at restaurant were classified as career apparel.

In addition to special-design uniforms, there is another type of career apparel somewhat less predictable; worn by large numbers of people in the labor force. Here are some examples: * A female lawyer representing a prestigious firm would be appropriately dress in a gray blue skirted suit. A dress with a suit jacket would also be acceptable . She should avoid clothing in brash color or casual styles that might reduce her credibility. * A male bank loan officer would be appropriately dressed in a tailored gray or blue suit, white shirt, and tie.

This same person dressed in a colorful blazer, sport shirt and plaid would be seen as too casual in most bank settings. * A technician employed by an auto dealership that sells new cars would be appropriately dressed in matching gray, tan, or blue shirt and pant. The technicians would be inappropriately dressed in jeans and a T-shirt. The Business Casual Look The term business casual is used to describe the movement toward standards that emphasize greater comfort and individuality. Business casual is clothing that allows you to feel comfortable at work but looks neat and professional.

It usually means slacks, khaki pants, collared long-sleeved shirts and blouses, and shoes with socks. It does not include jeans, T-shirts, shorts, sneakers or sandals. Your Facial Expression After your overall appearance, your face is the most visible part of you. Facial expressions are the cues most people really on in initial interactions. They provide the clues by which

others read your mood and personality. Studies conducted in nonverbal communication show that facial expressions strongly influence people's reactions to each other. The expressions on your face can quickly trigger a positive or negative reaction from those you meet.

If you want to identify the inner feelings of another person, watch the individuals' facial expressions closely. A frown may tell you “ something is wrong”. Smile generally communicates “ things are OK”. These facial expressions usually reflect inner emotions more accurately than words. The smile is the most recognizable signal in the world. People everywhere tend to trust a smiling face. Your Entrance and Carriage The way you enter someone's office or business meeting can influence the image you project. A nervous or apologetic entrance may ruin your chances of getting a job, closing a sale, or getting the raise you have earned.

The person who has confidence in himself or herself indicates this by a strong stride, a friendly smile, good posture, and a genuine sense of energy. This is the effective way to set the stage for productive meetings. When you ask for respect visually, you get it. Your Voice The tone of your voice, the rate of speed which you speak (tempo), the volume of your speech, and your ability to pronounce words clearly contribute greatly to the meaning attached to your verbal messages. A conscious effort to improve your voice can play an important role in your career.

You can stop speaking in a monotone, talking too fast or too slow, or mumbling your words. The Handshake When two people first meet, a handshake is usually the only physical contact between them. A handshake

is a friendly and professional way to greet someone or to take leave, regardless of gender. The handshake can communicate warmth, genuine concern for other person, and strength. It can also communicate aloofness, indifference, and weakness. The message you send the other party through your handshake depends on a combination of the following factors: * Degree of firmness Degree of dryness of hands * Duration of grip * Depth of interlock * Eye contact during handshake Etiquette for Changing World Etiquette is a set of traditions based on kindness, efficiency and logic. Sometime we need new etiquette guideline to deal with our changing world. 1. Dining etiquette Business is frequently conducted at breakfast, lunch, or dinner, so we have to aware of table manners. There are some additional table manners to keep in mind. Do not begin eating until the people around you have their plates . If you have not been served, however, encourage others to go ahead.

To prevent awkward moments during the meal, avoid ordering food that is not easily controlled, such as ribs, spaghetti, and chicken with bones or lobsters. 2. Meetings etiquette Business meetings should start and end on time. When you attend a meeting, arrive on time and don't feel obligated to comment each time on agenda. If you are in charge of the meeting, end it by summarizing key points, reviewing the decisions made, and recapping the responsibilities assigned to individuals during the meeting . Always start and end the meeting on a positive note. 3. Cell Phone Etiquette

New technologies often bring new annoyances, and the cell phone is no exception . Cell phone contempt surfaces in offices, restaurants, houses of worship, and many other places. 4. Cell phone etiquette is based on a few simple guidelines. First, it's not acceptable to use your cell phone at business

meetings, in elevators, or at restaurants. When making or receiving a call, talk in a normal speaking voice. Try to confine your calls to private areas. It is rude to inflict your conversation on people near you. Finally, if a coworkers or friend insist on “ staying connected” at all times and you find this behavior annoying, confront the person. . Conversational Etiquette When you establish new relationships, avoid calling people by their first name too soon. Never assume that work-related associates prefer to be addressed informally by their first names. Use titles of respects –Ms, Miss, Mr. , Professor or Dr. , until the relationship is established. 6. Network etiquette Networking, – making contact with people at meetings, social events, or other venues, is an effective job search method. Networking is also important to sales person searching for prospect and to professional who needs to build a client base.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENCE AT THE JOB INTERVIEW Professional presence has special meaning when you are preparing for a job interview . In most cases you competing against several other applicants, so you can’t afford to make a mistake. A common mistake among job applicant is failure to acquire background information on the employer. Without this information, it is difficult to prepare questions to ask during the interview, and decisions about what to wear will be more difficult. Keep in mind that regardless of the dress code of the organization, it is always appropriate to dress conservatively.

If you arrive for an interview wearing torn jeans and a T-shirt, the person conducting the interview may think you are not serious about the job. The expectation of most employers is that the job applicants will be well groomed and dress appropriately One of the most important objectives of a job interview is to communicate the image that you are someone who is

conscientious, so be prepared. If possible, visit the place of business before your interview. Observe the people already working there; then dress one step up in terms of professional appearance. What's most important is that you show that you care enough to make a good impression.