



image matters

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Hired or fired?

New research confirms something that many people have intuitively concluded - that how you present yourself impacts on your personal and career success.

Whether you've been watching the Apprentice or Young Musician of the Year, you'll have noticed how an individual's personal presentation affects the participant's own credibility and confidence as well as the audience's perception of their credibility and confidence.

When Alan Sugar's team of Apprentices went to Morocco in the recent series, one of their first thoughts was about what to wear - because they didn't want to offend; they wanted to be appropriate and they were aware that how they dressed could affect their ability to complete the task and therefore their ultimate success.

In the Young Musician of the Year competition, a category finalist was shown deciding what to wear for the occasion and he started off choosing things that clearly expressed his personality - they were quite vibrant and dynamic, as he was. He was later persuaded into a different style and look and, in the event, he didn't win. This is likely to have had much more to do with his skills as a musician, and yet it served to highlight the importance of being appropriately dressed for an occasion and how feeling, as well as looking, good in our clothes impacts on confidence and competitive edge.



A recent online survey of people from all walks of life conducted by First Impressions has shown that 90% of respondents believe that 'personal presentation is critical to my credibility'. When it comes to climbing the career ladder or looking for new challenges elsewhere, how we look significantly impacts on our ability to get what we want. In fact 90% of respondents in the survey also believe that 'a candidate's appearance influences their ability to be successful at interview', whilst 86% of respondents believe it was 'usually true' that a consistently high standard of personal presentation was an important leadership behaviour'. Watching Gordon Brown, Carla Bruni and Fiona Shackleton cope with the limelight in recent months gives a fascinating insight into the power of presentation.



Image matters in the virtual world

The impact of image knows no boundaries and, if you know what an Avatar is then you'll understand the term Second Life, a virtual 3D world imagined and created by its 'residents' (as those who participate online are known). For many younger people, their 'virtual' lives are almost as important to them as their 'real' lives and the persona they adopt in their chosen virtual world, their Avatar, is a reflection of how they perceive themselves, or would like to be perceived.

Forward thinking organizations aiming to engage with a younger target audience, such as graduate recruitment, are now incorporating the concept of Avatars into their activities. By asking recruits to create a 'persona' that reflects their real selves, they can capture the imagination of a younger audience and bring the process into the 21st century. However, it appears that designing your Avatar is a tricky business - how to dress him/her, how to accessorise, which hair styles/colours and which bodies and faces to choose - these can all be just as challenging as doing this for real. Now image advice is being offered for those creating an Avatar to help them get their 'look' just right - just professional enough, just sexy enough, just right. It's a whole new world but image still matters!

To discuss how First Impressions can help you or your organisation with tailored training or coaching, call 01908 318202 for an initial chat or e-mail julia@firstimpressions.uk.com to request an **e-Information Pack**. You can also request our **Open Course Prospectus** which includes information about our modules on personal image and impact and business etiquette.

When the going gets tough...

When times get tough, it is more cost effective to develop your existing staff than to recruit new ones. Companies are learning to nurture talent and invest in the potential of those in-house who could grow into the high-flyers and leaders of tomorrow. This makes the business more efficient internally and more attractive externally as people not only do their jobs better but also present the company to customers more effectively.

Enhanced personal branding helps to enhance an organisation's corporate brand. In the tougher economic climate prevailing, it will be the organisations that engage and retain their best people that will ride out the stormy weather.

When companies don't survive, individuals who find themselves unexpectedly back on the job market can give themselves the edge by



remembering that 'image matters' and taking care to ensure a polished and memorable image and impact at every interview. Our one-day **'Impression Management'** module from our **Open Course Programme** is ideal for anyone in this situation.

First Impressions expands to second Milton Keynes site

The feel of the country in the heart of the city was a key factor in First Impressions Image Consultancy Ltd's recent move to new premises at the City Discovery Centre at Bradwell Abbey. Now based at The Red Barn, an old building on the outside but pristine on the inside thanks to a recent refurbishment, First Impressions has gained the space to continue its steady growth. With a smart Training Centre at Shenley Pavilions only a few minutes drive away, First Impressions brings a steady stream of visitors from across the globe to Milton Keynes to gain high quality training in image skills.



Managing Director Julia Campion said "It's been an exciting month – we've stood in Red Square and explored the Kremlin; run a very successful three-day Times Crème Show at Olympia and managed a complex office move without disrupting business. Our new office marks a new phase in First Impressions' long history and puts us in a strong position to build on our success in the future."



The move comes as First Impressions, the UK's leading image consultancy, prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2009 and to expand its activities in both the UK corporate market and overseas training opportunities. A recent visit to Moscow to see the First Impressions Russia team allowed directors Julia & Paul Campion to forge stronger links with the Russian licensed training company and Russian consultants from as far afield as Irkutsk in Siberia.

Times Crème Show

Our third Times Crème Show in May 2008 was a major success and we have been asked back for future dates. Recognising that the PA is an influential member of the corporate team, this show aims to give them everything they may need under one roof. The First Impressions Stand




provided mini-consultations on colour, style and wardrobe issues and were a sell-out once again. We are building on our work with PA's through our partnership with London PA magazine by writing regular articles covering all aspects of image. Subjects have included how to dress professionally at work during the summer and how to create the right image for corporate events.



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