



Insightful Communications... Expressing You

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First Impressions... By Sheri

The woman across the room

You know the type...you've seen her, you might even know her. She looks like she has it altogether, not a care in the world. Her hair is nicely styled, her outfit complements her beautifully, and she looks great! If you got to know her well, you would realize that she has the same concerns and challenges as we all do. She's simply handling her outside appearance! I recall this message fondly from the beginning of my career, when I had the extraordinary opportunity to meet and be mentored by Tricia Defibaugh, Founder of Aloette Cosmetics. These words are as poignant now, as they were in the mid-1980's when I started my career.

Take It Up a Notch With Aloette

"Because your appearance says so much about you..." (Aloette's Founding Motto)

Did you know that it takes less than 40 seconds for someone to make a snap judgment of us?

Spending time and money on your business cards and other marketing and promotional materials is very important for your business, but one thing we can't forget is: YOU - your image - it's your main asset. The image you project to others should match everything else about your business. Our potential customers will make assumptions about us in the first few seconds of meeting, whether that seems fair or not. **Recognize the importance and power of making a good first impression.**

How we act, our appearance - whether we are groomed and well put-together - will affect that first impression. When we are nicely put together, we, as women, tend to feel more confident. This gives us one less thing to be self-conscious about or distracted by... like having a bad hair day - it affects us! You want to project to others that you care about the important details, because it translates to: **"Your business is safe with me because I will pay attention to the important details of your business."**

The small business market is huge. You want as many customers to be attracted to dealing with you as possible. The more potential customers can relate to you is so important, it can actually change the course of what business comes your way. Clients who put a high importance on neatness, for example, would enjoy dealing with someone who is also neat in appearance, because they can relate to that quality. If there is a vast difference between a customer's expectations and the first impressions that are given by an individual, they may think perhaps that person doesn't take themselves or their work seriously enough.

In my numerous years of going to, or leading networking groups, I am glad to have had the opportunity to get to know so many people. However, there have been some who I may not have otherwise been drawn to because of the first impression they gave. We're not always blessed with time to get to know and connect with others, so it's vitally important that others 'see, hear and feel', not only what we do and what we offer, but our uniqueness, passion and commitment as well!

It's so crucial to be referable and relatable to as many people as possible, and not limit the amount of people who would be interested in doing business with us.

We always want to keep challenging ourselves, and have goals that we strive for in order to move forward in our lives and our business. If we don't, we can settle into a mediocre mind set. It helps to be open-minded, see ourselves objectively, and to keep thinking of ways and things that we can do to keep our outer image fresh and attractive to others.

When you look well pulled together when dressing for business, and when you wear your makeup tastefully, you not only look attractive in a business sense, but you take your image up a notch. This encourages eye contact, and exudes a professional image. It's not really about the makeup, but what it exudes. You are accentuating your good features, for instance, your eyes. When you feel that you look good to others, you in turn, create more confidence in yourself. If you want to make a good first impression, these are the things that will work!

Another important perspective, if at all possible, is to recognize how small a part first impressions should play when you are meeting others for the first time. As much as we would like everyone to be like this, we can only control what we do, and those who follow this philosophy, will win at the end of the day!

This is all about seeing past a person's protective shield (we all have one, don't we?). It's about 'not' pre-judging what you think she needs, or what you think she can afford, etc. (I'm not talking about qualifying who your customer is or isn't. That's a different topic.) It's just that people are so quick to judge these days. You don't want to be one of those people. **You want to be the person that sees and brings out the best in others...** and it will come back to you tenfold. You'll simply be a lot happier too!

I've had countless situations in my career, where 'if' I had pre-judged, been impatient, or thought that something or someone wasn't worth my time, I would have lost out on so much. What's worse than that is the other person would've lost out too!

I am refreshed so many times, when I first meet someone, and initially I can tell she may be holding back. (Often this is because of past experiences, which we need to be understanding of.) She may even act disinterested in the beginning. I've seen this turn around completely, as my first goal is always to ensure that a person gets to feel comfortable with me. You've heard the phrase, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care".

Once people trust you, they will listen to you. Even if they don't need what you have to offer, they often will still want to help you further by recommending you to their friends!

Although this message focuses mostly on first impressions with respect to business, it is just as important and as easily applied in many other areas of our lives!

