

What Does Your Appearance Say About Your Personal Brand?

BY KIM CRUMPLER

First Impressions: Sending a Message without Saying a Word

According to University of Illinois Extension statistics, first impressions are the result of:

- 55% Appearance and body language
- 38% Tone of voice and
- 7% What you say

You are constantly making first impressions. While the adage is old, the value still holds - you never get a second chance to make a great first impression, whether you're going to an interview or just interacting in the business world on a daily basis.

Employers want it all and they can get it. With the number of people vying to keep their jobs, as well as applicants interviewing for scarce new ones, you need to ensure your Personal Brand is strong and communicates the right message. In "The Brand Called You", by Peter Montoya, Personal Branding is defined as the process that takes your skills, personality and unique characteristics and packages them into a powerful identity that lifts you above the crowd of anonymous competitors... Personal Branding is the most powerful success and business-building tool ever devised."

Think of your appearance as the packaging to your brand identity; it directly correlates to how others perceive and therefore, interact with you. In this job market, it is absolutely essential that you look polished while feeling confident and relaxed. It impacts the perception of your colleagues and prospects, employer and yourself:

- To your colleagues and prospects it communicates: "You can rely on me - I'm solid".
- To your employer: "I know our product, dress to reflect our corporate brand and am ready to win business."
- To you it communicates: "I'm tailored-to-the task and can focus on getting the job done."

The more you convey the message of confidence to others, the more you start to live it, becoming more assured, effective and successful.

Kim Crumpler's Personal Branding Tip: Be consistent in demonstrating your technical, time management, organizational, and communication skills - both verbal and nonverbal. Articulate your value in the business world by pulling every tool out of your professional tool box and put them regularly to work. Knowing

that appearance and body language comprise 55% of a first impression, before you dress in the morning ask yourself, "Who's my audience?", "What do I want to communicate?", "Is the way I'm dressed communicating my intended message and reflecting my Personal Brand?" If not, you'll want to make some adjustments.



First impressions are critical, but will only get you so far. Remember, those who consistently land on top are always strengthening their Personal Brand. In "50 Ways in 50 Days: Inspiration and Tips to Fearlessly Energize Your Business and Score More Sales", Lori Richardson writes, "Quarterly or twice a year, get input on your image and your brand from various sources."

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Kim Crumpler is 9 Year Veteran Stylist, Personal Shopper & Owner of Uniquely Savvy

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