



**Glou**  
**International Inc.**  
Retained Executive Search Since 1960

## ***Developing Your Professional Image*** **You never get a second chance to make a first impression** **By: Alan Glou**

Have you met people who looked great, but as soon as they opened their mouths you wanted to cover your ears and run? You may have experienced *cognitive dissonance*— an uncomfortable difference between how they looked and what they sounded like. As you develop **your** image, consider what impression you make with every aspect of your communication.

Here are a few observations and suggestions you may find valuable. They tend to fall into three areas: style, content and consistency (how you speak, what you say, and whether you look and act like what you claim to be). Your task should be to create a total image that will support the achievement of your goals. Attention to the details of your presentation of your **self** and your product or service reinforces your claim to be a competent professional with quality offerings.

- High, shrill voices are considered childish and detract from the speaker's credibility.
- Men hear in a lower range than women (really!), so pitch your voice to your audience.
- Breathy voices remind people of the “brainless broads” in old movies.
- If you are not sure that your voice is loud enough, ask the folks seated in the back!
- Think about the point of what you are saying and use your voice to emphasize meanings.
- Be sure to end questions with a questioning tone of voice... and wait for the answers.
- Even when asking rhetorical questions, pause for people to imagine their responses.
- Do not smile when talking about sad or stressful things, but do smile when introduced.
- Do not hesitate to say that you are excited (not nervous) and impressed by the audience.
- Be sensitive to body language and try to match kinetics/proxemics (movements/closeness).
- Beware the use of inappropriate, irrelevant, repetitive, too-large or too-small gestures.
- To be perceived as a clear thinker, keep sentences short and leave time for reactions.
- Gear your vocabulary to the your listeners' backgrounds—if unsure, keep things simple.
- Since most people cannot remember more than three things at a time, prioritize your content.
- Keep audio/visual aids simple, plan how to use handouts and make aids nice or not at all.
- Write down names, companies, clever statements (ask if you may quote- it's very flattering).
- Don't neglect the basics: clean shoes, fingernails and hair; good haircut, quality accessories.
- Stand with feet apart, body centered, head on straight and **don't forget to breathe!**

AP4 10802