

## WORKPLACE WISDOM NEWSLETTER

### You Have 7 Seconds to Create Your First Impression!

#### A Costly First Impression Story

*Last month, I went to a sporting goods store to buy a pair of running shoes. A man with an arrogant and condescending manner waited on me. The crooked grin on his face sent the message that I didn't know what I wanted. Having bought dozens of athletic shoes, I was unruffled. When I asked him what the difference was in Shoe A and Shoe B, he laughed and repeated my question to another salesperson. Then he began his condescending lecture on "shoe-making". After five minutes of listening to endless wandering and extravagant information, I walked out. I (or this sale) wasn't important enough to him. He acted like I was "bothering him" when I asked him for help. I ask you, "Isn't that what he's paid to do??" **The result of that encounter? Very costly!** (1) I won't shop in that store again. (2) I went out very agitated. (3) I bought shoes that very hour in a competitor's store two blocks away! (4) When I calmed down, I called the store's shoe manager and reported the salesman's behavior. (Not a good thing for his performance review). (5) I have told 10 friends about the poor service I received in that store.*

### Some of us need reminding of how important our FIRST IMPRESSION really is.

*Sometimes, we "don't look people in the eye" when we meet them.*

*Sometimes, we look like we've been sucking on sliced lemons.*

*Sometimes, we nervously and meaninglessly babble, ie "yada-yada-yada"!*

### We can send terrible signals that are hard to reverse!

Sometimes, it stems from our innate shyness. Sometimes, it comes from *not knowing* our first impression packs such a huge wallop! Roger Ailes on Fox News claims we have 7 seconds to make a first impression!

### THREE TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION.

#### 1. Rev up your attitude.

Some people radiate with internal energy and enthusiasm. There's a smile on their face. They send the message, "It's fun to meet you!" I'm talking about the genuine energy that shows up in your eyes --- not the theatrical energy of hugging, jumping, or gyrating that can come across a little excessive.

Your attitude of "welcome and warmth" surfaces from within. It comes from the place where your emotions and feelings reside.

Yes, you can fake your attitude -- but not over long periods of time. People eventually know. Your negative or positive energy soon surfaces.

Positive attitudes can demonstrate our receptivity, openness, and warmth.

Negative attitudes can demonstrate our distance, distrust, and disdain.

**So, examine and adjust your attitude to make a good FIRST IMPRESSION!**

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## 2. Speak up and learn to be succinct.

If you have something on your mind --- if you have a message, then speak it. Learn to be clear and that is not, necessarily, "wordy". Does it take you 6 sentences to render the same message that 2 sentences could send? Get to your point and cut the extra fluff, you verbose storytellers! You leave a less-than-winsome impression.

President Bush has been criticized for the smirk on his face, and his PR people worry that he's sending the wrong message. But no one has ever criticized the President for being wordy...he's to-the-point. He's even criticized by the rest of those who dig for negative descriptors as "blunt". But it works. We know what he said...whether we like it or not.

**So, trim down your message by eliminating lightweight, unnecessary wordiness!**

## 3. Recognize the power of your facial expression. What's the look on your face?

Your expression can "welcome" or "offend". You really don't need to say anything at all. If you look gloomy, I brace myself for bad news. If you look cheerful, I anticipate this will be a good meeting. If you look stoic, I get prepared for a soul-wrenching story! If you're face shows a pleasant acceptance, I know I'm welcome and free to be myself. And so on.... You get the idea.

Your face pleasantly says "Welcome" or it irritatingly says "What do you want?"

It shows your internal self. The Negative: grumpiness, jealousy, hatred, disgust, and disbelief. The Positive: joy, pride, acceptance, love, and friendship.

**So, be aware of your facial expression! Eventually, your expression becomes a *habit*.**

## Is learning to make good FIRST IMPRESSIONS relevant for all of us?

Yes, every single one of us! FIRST IMPRESSIONS – those 7 seconds - are important.

## Is making a good FIRST IMPRESSION relevant in the workplace?

My goodness! Absolutely relevant! You either "turn people off" or you "welcome them". You need information all day long...don't "turn people off" before you know what they want. If you're in the service business, remember my shoe story!

I'm not much on giving "should's" to other people.

But in this case, I'm going to go ahead and say what's on my mind:

*"You should always care what FIRST IMPRESSION you are making...  
as well as the one you are leaving behind."*

*Your FIRST IMPRESSION can be a deal-maker or a deal-breaker -  
both in your professional life and in your personal life.*

*There's an old saying, "Ignorance is bliss."*

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*But when it comes to making a good FIRST IMPRESSION, I say,  
"Ignorance is not blissful...it is fatal."*

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