Appearance matters

If you work in any aspect of marketing, you know that appearance matters. We look at various marketing materials and we judge whether they look professional, or home-made, cutting-edge or stuck in time. We advise our clients to re-do logos, update brochures, set up Facebook pages. Our goal is to make sure that their appearance is up to par with the expectations in the marketplace.

Recently, I wrote a post saying that you CAN judge a book by its cover. After all, designers spend a lot of time designing that cover to entice you to read it. Perhaps the book won't be up to your literary standards, but as a marketing piece you know the book accomplished its mission (getting you to buy it if not to read it).

In personal marketing, appearance matters even more. Again, I have written about this before, but I want to revisit it. If you are in the market for a job, say, then you are ALWAYS job hunting. If you are going to a networking meeting, you must look professional. If you look sloppy or like you just rolled out of bed then you will be perceived as someone who doesn't care.

Last Friday, I was indulging a guilty pleasure and watching What Not to Wear on TLC. The episode was about a 38-year old professor of non-verbal communication who dressed frumpily. She actually looked at least 20 years older than her age. Stacy and Clinton (the show's hosts, in case you haven't seen it) kept telling her that she was communicating to her students that she just didn't care about her appearance, and thus did not care about herself. She had a hard time understanding that what she wore, how she wore it, indeed her appearance, was undermining her message that we send out all sorts of nonverbal cues. It was fascinating to watch because here is a case of someone who understands that everything you

put out there (clothing, etc.) is communication. In the end, she came around and by the end of the show she looked much closer to her age than when she started. She also looked far more professional and modern.

It is hard to judge how we appear. We see ourselves day after day and we lose perspective. Same can be said for our marketing materials. This is why we often need to get a third-party opinion. And we need to listen carefully to that third-party. Perhaps they are saying something we don't want to hear. For your graphics and marketing pieces, an expert can do wonders. Sometimes an update makes the difference. For personal appearance, start with trusted friends or associates, and if you are very serious, hire an image consultant.

We are judged by our appearance. And our appearance contributes to how people perceive us. Take control of your appearance. Make sure people perceive you the way you want to be perceived.

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