

How to make sure nobody likes you

If you have been to any networking or social event, you have met this person: the person nobody likes. Chances are good that this person has not one single solitary clue why nobody seems to be wanting to interact, exchange business cards, or just chat.

Here's what to do if you want to be just like that person:

- Talk endlessly about yourself (and never ever ask the other person anything).
- Use big words or obscure references, forcing whoever you are interacting to ask you what you mean.
- Brag (I don't mean talk about your accomplishment, but actually brag, like this: Well, when I was on safari last year with Robert Redford, we ran into a pack of rare pink Rhinoceros...).
- Don't maintain eye contact. People just love shifty-eyed people—gives them a vote of confidence.
- Have a clammy or limp handshake (or worse, a clammy AND limp handshake).
- Shift the burden of conversation to the other person.
- Denigrate whatever the other person is saying ("Oh, you think that is a big deal? I got a bigger deal!")
- Live in the past or in another place: you know, things were much better then and there.
- Speak ill of the host, venue, group, etc. I don't mean constructive criticism like "I thought the parking was a bit difficult here," but something like "Jane Doe and her group just don't have a clue! "
- Have poor hygiene or grooming.

Unfortunately, the first impression you make is usually a lasting one. However, you can also not try to so hard to be

likeable, people see through that too. You have to be who you are, but be aware that what you say and do do affect how other people perceive you.

Next, we'll talk about how this personal behavior is often seen in marketing communications (and especially in social media).

How are you perceived?

“Quick, acute, and intuitive cognition.” That is how Merriam-Webster defines perception. It is a quick assessment of what is before us. It is how we form impressions and judgments.

Have you ever considered how you are perceived by a potential client? Potential friend? Man/woman on the street? Obviously, we may not care how a complete stranger perceives us, but in business we should definitely be concerned with the image we are giving potential customers, clients or partners (a partner can be anyone who we do business with—from someone we network with, to someone who refers business to us or an acquaintance we run into occasionally).

There are many angles from which you are perceived:

- Personal appearance and demeanor
- How you sound
- Online presence, which includes your websites, what is written about you, your blog, and your social media presence
- Articles about you
- Articles you've written
- Your marketing materials (brochures, postcards, reports, etc)

- Your behavior and actions
- Your associations

If people have a positive perception of you it will help get business. A negative perception on the other hand will impede your success.

How to assess

Start with a simple Google search on yourself to see what comes up. Negative, positive or neutral?

Turn a critical eye on your website and/or blog. Would a visitor to your site know what you do and why you are qualified to do what you do? What would he/she think of your services?

How are people responding to you on social media? How many followers do you have? More importantly, who is following you? Quality is important here. How about on Linked In—do people accept your requests for connection? Are you giving them enough for them to want to connect with you?

When you go to an event, do you feel confident? Do you ever feel unprepared or frazzled? If so, what aspects of your appearance and demeanor need work?

It is hard to self-assess from all these angles so it may be best to ask a trusted friend or colleague to give you some feedback. A marketing consultant (such as me!) can help assess your marketing materials.

Have you assessed how you are perceived? Please let me know how you did it and what helped.