

# 4 Questions to Ask Yourself about Your Image

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According to Amy Cuddy, social psychologist at Harvard Business School, the first impression on a job interview rapidly leads to the second impression. "We're judging how warm and trustworthy the person is, and that's trying to answer the question, 'What are this person's intentions toward me?' And we're also asking ourselves, 'How strong and competent is this person?'"

As you polish your first impression, don't forget these two traits, Cuddy urges: trustworthiness and confidence. They "account for 80 to 90 percent of first impressions."

[In an article from Forbes by Lisa Quast](#), the term "image management" is bandied about, defined by the Image Consulting Business Institute as the "ongoing, pro-active process of evaluating and controlling the impact of your appearance on you, on others, and the achievement of your goals. It is a science and an art that provides a framework, addressing all the elements – clothing, grooming practices, body language and etiquette, and vocal communication."

Based on the article, here are three questions to ask yourself about your image and whether or not you're project trustworthiness and confidence:

## 1. What do your clothes and grooming say about you?

Image often starts with what you're wearing and how you're groomed. Quast writes. If you're applying for a leadership role, are you wearing the clothes that generate the image of a leader? What about your hair? If you're a man, how do you manage your facial hair? If you're a woman, how do you manage your make-up?

What does your appearance say about you?

## 2. Does your non-verbal communication project the impression that you are competent, confident, trustworthy, and approachable?

Take stock of your non-verbal communication skills, beginning with your handshake. How do you shake hands? Firmly with eye contact? Or limply and hurriedly?

## 3. Or, does your attitude tell people you're stressed, indecisive, overwhelmed, and/or unreliable?

What effect does your attitude have on others? "Do you smile when first meeting someone, even if you're busy and have other things on your mind?" Quast asks. "Are you focusing on that person and giving them your full attention? If not, you might be harming your image."

## 4. Do you speak clearly, professionally, and at an appropriate pace and sound level when first meeting someone?

One thing you may want to do to prepare for an interview is to have a friend role-play it with you, Quast suggests. Not only can they evaluate the clarity and quality of your answers, but they can also give you insight into how you're verbalizing your answers.

As physicians and advanced practitioners looking for jobs, image management is vital in creating that positive first and second impression. In what ways do you manage your image? As you've gained experience in the professional world, what changes have you made to your image to project yourself in a trustworthy and confident manner?



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