

Five Quick Tips for Professional Men

By Dawn Stanyon, AICI FLC, Professional Image Consultant

<http://professionalism.tumblr.com>

The good news: To LOOK professional, men can invest in quality suits, blazers, dress pants, dress shirts, ties, shoes and belts. As long as these items consistently fit well, are clean, and in good repair, the average work-a-day wardrobe can serve a man for quite a few years.

The bad news: To BE professional, exterior appearance is important, but equally important are communication skills, confident body language, and awareness of self and others. I asked a few image-savvy guys the following question: "What's your favorite piece of advice for men about professionalism?" Here's a summary of what I learned:

1. (@derekbbanga) an image and etiquette expert with Public Image in Kenya, Africa, told me, "Posture! Standing tall, not slouching, stomach in, chin parallel to the ground, shoulders back."

To project confidence, strong body language, including excellent posture, is a must

. People want to work with confident – yet still approachable – people.

2. (@TheModernGent)said as far as reputation goes, "**authenticity rules.**" In a recent study, Lauren J. Human and her colleagues looked at this issue. They defined positive self-presentation as making a good impression while staying authentic.

3. (@artofmanliness). I've linked to a great article on how to write an e-mail so you actually get a response. While Manliness doesn't call this "communication etiquette," that's what it is. Your personal brand is projected through e-mail messages, Tweets, Facebook posts, and texts just as readily as it is through your physical appearance.

4. My friend, Geoff, is a sharp and professional dresser and well-traveled businessman. His top tip: To build relationships and be perceived as professional, you need to "**PAY ATTENTION!**"

(His caps are intentional!) “Put the mobile device away and direct your full and undivided attention to whomever you are speaking to. Nothing is more distracting than having a conversation with someone who is constantly glancing at or fidgeting with a mobile device.

5. The final and fifth tip is my own. **The outstanding professional communicator sets expectations, communicates them clearly, and listens when others speak**

. This is surprisingly difficult to do. Issues around communication are the number one concern I encounter when I'm working with individuals and corporate groups. Improve your communication skills by increasing your self-awareness. Take a personality survey such as Myers-Briggs or the DISC personality survey. These types of emotional intelligence tests are very interesting and edifying too. Also, ask colleagues what they feel are your communication strengths and limitations. Have big shoulders and listen to what they tell you. And consider working with an accredited professional image consultant.

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