

Develop Your Own Style & Be Noticed

By Robbie Motter

Robbie has been a success in the corporate world and in the federal government. Now she is committing her energy and drive to helping other women succeed. She is a master "networker" with her own inimitable style.



Personal style is essential to marketing you or your business. The right look and attitude can separate you from the competition. The way you dress, your tone of voice, and your sense of humor can make people take notice of you and attract potential clients. Below are some tips for developing your own business-savvy style.

1. **Make others feel comfortable around you.** Be aware of the comfort zones of your peers and superiors. Remember you can put people at ease with your style: your way of speaking, the way you dress, your humor, your ease, and your confidence.

2. **Develop the right look.** When working on your style, first think about how you look: your clothes, your hair, and your makeup if you are a woman. You need to ask, "What are other people wearing? Do I look good in that? If not, how much can I vary the style without going too far? How can I conform and yet be myself?" Yes, there are nonconformists, if being one matters to you, go ahead and do it. But if that's the choice you make, you may have to compensate in some other area in order to get ahead in your organization.

If possible, spend some money on how you look. This includes both what you wear and how you groom yourself. Remember, you need to dress at the appropriate level, even on dress-down days.

If casual dress-down is the style of your organization, you could still be the best casually-dressed person in the office and get noticed. You want to get noticed, "Noticed, through, for your fine tailoring, not for your inappropriate ensembles." Some people make the mistake of dressing too casually on "casual Fridays," undercutting the intelligent, businesslike image they project during the rest of the week.

3. **Develop your room radar.** Start by looking at what's going around you in a room. Start learning how to "read" whatever room you are in; assessing the people there and the ways they are interacting.

Some people do this intuitively; others need to learn how. Knowing some psychology helps, but you can also wing it. Start with the basics, and once you get good at it, the nuances will follow.

Who's in the power seat? Who's next to that person? Who's holding forth? Who's holding back? Who's nervous and who's not, and why? Who's really running the meeting? To whom does everyone defer? Are there any undercurrents?

Then decide who in the room you need to influence with your ideas and how you can adjust your style to accomplish that. If you concentrate on this kind of analysis, you won't have time to be nervous about the meeting or your performance.

4. Market to the audience. Once you have checked out what's happening, why not look at those present as your customers, to whom you are going to sell your ideas?

If you're making a presentation, or if you have an idea you want people to buy into, you must convince your "customers" that it's a good one. Now you can tailor your approach to the individuals you want to influence by doing what's called "selling to type."

You know which person or people in the room are the most important to sell to. What does their type need in order to buy in? Does one person want the data first, with no beating around the bush? Maybe another person prefers to hear ideas first and data second. A third might want conclusions first and then the deductions that went into them.

Is there someone who needs to establish a relationship with you before you launch into data and ideas? If you've worked with the people in the room before, you will have a basic idea of what they need before you even arrive at the meeting. However, every room, every meeting, is different and warrants a radar reading each and every time. The balance of power can change. Change your selling style – your presentation accordingly.

The appropriate pitch will hit home, the others will buy your idea, they'll become comfortable with the process, and your next sale will be much easier. This technique need not be confined to group meetings. You'll also find it useful in one-on-one negotiations with your boss, as well as with those you're managing. You must be flexible, ready to change as the tenor of a meeting changes. Remember, successful style adapters do not change who they are; they only make modifications to get to their goal.

5. Develop "executive presence." This is probably the most essential style element for success. Executive presence makes you stand out above others even those that have the same brainpower and technical skill. You can acquire it, and the more you use it, the better it will be.

What elements should you put together to achieve executive presence? Research has listed some of them as: maintaining an energetic, positive attitude; being a team player; conveying confidence by the way you carry yourself and the way you communicate; maintaining a sense of humor; combining problem-solving and people management skills in your daily work.

"I personally believe that it's important in many organizations to develop a reputation as someone who can provide sound advice but also solve problems: move the ball forward, work effectively with other people, manage projects, manage people, bring people together, and facilitate the reconciliation of conflicting viewpoints."

6. Radiate confidence. This means exuding self-assurance. Confident individuals take slights with a grain of salt. They let negative comments slide. When someone gives them a bad time, they don't take the bait easily. They keep things in perspective. Remember you won't always feel confident, but that doesn't mean you can't act that way.

7. Humor is a great thing. Individuals, who have succeeded, stress again and again the importance of the quick response that shows you can take things lightly. You should go a step beyond the invaluable assets of laughing at situations and at yourself. You can learn the art of the funny story and the snappy comeback.

8. **Remember, if you don't blow your own horn, nobody else will.** False modesty and being timid have no place in an ambitious person's tool kit. When you are involved in an assignment, keep those you're working for posted so that they know what's happening.

If you are making good progress and you're excited about it, don't hesitate to make your enthusiasm known to your boss.

When you are finished with the work, be sure your boss knows the results – and if they are good don't hesitate to crow a little. Don't sit around and wait to be noticed. This is a powerful tool, remember successful work deserves public recognition- inside as well as outside your organization.

9. **Become visible.** Join associations and/or professional organizations.

This kind of exposure is one of the best tickets to moving up and being noticed. Most organizations are eager for new leaders; accept an officership within the organization you select.

Circulate at national conventions and trade shows. Join panel discussions. Being viewed as a contributor to your profession can be a major asset to your career.

Seek out public speaking opportunities in your organization and at industry and trade conferences. Although public speaking may terrify you, it's a talent you can acquire.

Start small by speaking at meetings, asking questions at conferences, spearheading discussions at staff workshops, hosting customer relation seminars.

10. **Get your name in print**, starting with small steps:

Suggest a topic to the editor of your in-house newsletter.

Write a short piece for your community newspapers. If you can be published in a trade journal on your technical specialty, it will go a long way toward building your credibility.

Volunteer for the visible assignments you know you can do. If you have been building your reputation, you may just get the go-ahead. And when that assignment results in a resounding success, your own visibility will skyrocket.

Remember to take time everyday to market yourself for success, it is really easy, and the results will be rewarding.

Robbie Motter is a *national speaker, coach, writer, teacher, TV Co-host and marketing & public relations consultant*. She also serves as the *NAFE (National Association for Female Executives) Western Regional Coordinator*. Robbie serves on the advisory board for the *Inland Empire Women's Business Center* in San Bernardino, is a *founding gold sponsor for the For You Network*, the ultimate network for women with heart. Check out her website at www.rmotter.com or contact her at 1-888-244-4420.