

Use Your Face

Say What You Want Without Saying a Word

by Tracie Davis, Artistic Director, The Image Studios

In a society where individuality and self-expression are celebrated, there are rules to the game especially when it comes to personal grooming and first impressions. A woman has a multitude of products to help communicate just about anything she wants from feminine to fierce. For men, facial hair and the condition of the skin can speak volumes between being considered competent to confident.

In general, younger men and women tend to be more willing to take bold risks; experimenting with facial-hair styles and color cosmetics respectively. But take the time to consider whether or not your boss *really* agrees that your 5'oclock shadow makes you look more mature, or your perfectly winged eyeliner indeed gives you a sexy "cat-eyed" look. Or do you look unprofessional?

Personal grooming habits can be used to help you present yourself in a more effective manner in the workplace. But please grab the shaving cream or makeup brush with caution and take the time to consider your audience.

Nicole Ciaffone, an assistant store director for Sephora, has been in management for over ten years and believes "Your makeup should reflect the environment you are in *and* the people you are working with." In other words, maybe electric, purple glitter eyeliner is not the best choice for a personal banker's daytime look. Likewise, for a makeup artist a bare face does not effectively communicate their skill and creativity to potential clients.

Men's facial hairstyles run along the same lines as makeup for a woman. Thicker, fuller sideburns may be the retro look that is currently "in," but think about how you will be perceived in your professional environment. Taking these things into consideration may seem superficial or shallow, but the fact remains, people subconsciously make decisions about you within the first ten seconds of meeting. Take the time to consider what you may be saying:

For both sexes:

- Well-groomed eyebrows add a polished and professional flair to any look whether conservative or creative, man or woman. Eyebrows are extremely important because they "frame" your face. For a man this means cleaning up stray hairs outside of the natural arch of the brow, especially in the case of a

unibrow. Women should clean up stray hairs as well but also create a more defined arch.

- Problematic skin on both men and women can suggest an unhealthy lifestyle or the lack of care.

For Men:

- Choosing a more conservative facial hairstyle with less geometric angles and keeping it consistent for a period of time will help to communicate stability.
- If you choose to sport a bald head, then keep the remaining facial hair on the softer side. A full beard or heavy mustache on a bald head can look unbalanced or out of proportion.
- 5'oclock shadows may be trendy and edgy but in a professional world it can look unkempt and unstable.
- Never let the hairs of your mustache fall below the top line of your lip. It can give the appearance of being sloppy, and can make you look "dated."
- What does a man do about cosmetic concerns such as large pores, oily skin, acne scars, dark circles, blemishes or discoloration. If you have any of these or other concerns, your best solution is to use a skin care line to treat the condition. There are numerous products that will solve a wide array of skin issues. Sure, many are packaged for women, but the products work just as well on a man's skin. More and more companies are entering into the world of men's skin care such as Clarins, Anthony Logistics and Clinique.

For Women:

- Curling the lashes and using mascara helps to add "expression" to the eyes and create a more "open" appearance. Bigger, brighter eyes can give the impression of being friendly, approachable and happy.
- Bold lip colors can be intimidating or distracting in a more conservative environment such as the banking industry. On the contrary bolder lips can exemplify a great use of color and self-expression in a more "artsy" career such as graphic design.
- The use of glitter is often regarded as juvenile or childish and speaks to immaturity. It is frowned upon in just about any corporate profession.

