



Top experts share their secrets for success

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Socially **Smart** *&* **Savvy**

Top experts share their secrets for success

★
THRIVE
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Dedication

We dedicate this book to you
the person who realizes the power of learning
what to do and how to do it in achieving your
goals and building a successful life and who
wants to make the right impression every time.
We salute you for embracing more knowledge
and we celebrate your commitment to being a
socially savvy individual.

The Co-Authors of *Socially Smart and Savvy*

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This book is the brilliant concept of Caterina Rando, the founder of THRIVE Publishing™ and a respected business strategist and coach, with whom many of us have worked to grow our businesses. Working closely with many coaches, consultants and other professionals, she realized how valuable the knowledge they possessed would be to those people wanting to be more socially savvy. The result was putting our ideas into this comprehensive book.

Without Caterina's "take action" spirit, her positive attitude and her commitment to excellence, you would not be reading this book of which we are all so proud. She was supported by a dedicated team who worked diligently to put together the best possible book for you. We are truly grateful for everyone's stellar contribution.

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cover, photos, artwork and book layout, thank you for your enthusiasm, problem solving and attention to detail throughout this project.

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The Co-Authors of *Socially Smart and Savvy*

Introduction

Congratulations! You have opened an incredible resource, packed with great ideas to make you socially savvy. Whether you are an experienced business professional, a new college graduate just starting out or an entrepreneur building your business, you are about to discover how to maximize your image and leverage your contacts to grow and prosper personally and professionally.

Being socially savvy is much more than handing out business cards or knowing which fork to use at a formal dinner. It is about creating a consistently recognizable brand, communicating effectively, building a network you can rely on and presenting the right image every time.

As top experts in each of our respective specialties, we have joined to give you proven, highly effective strategies for social success. It is all here—how-to's for social networking, creating influence, dressing for your true self and even how to host memorable events and choose the right wine!

The professionals you will meet in this book all want you to have quality tools and gain the confidence you need to enhance your social skills and master new ones. We have shared our best tips and provided proven guidelines that can make you become more Socially Smart and Savvy in every personal and professional situation.

To get the most out of this book, we recommend that you read through it once, cover to cover. Then go back and follow the ideas that apply to you, in the chapters most relevant to your current situation. Every improvement you make in your social skills will make a difference in your life and business.

If you take action and apply the strategies, tips and tactics we share in these pages, you will reap many rewards. We are confident that, like our thousands of satisfied clients, with our knowledge and your action you, too, will become more Socially Smart and Savvy.

To you and your continued success!

The Co-Authors of *Socially Smart and Savvy*

Who *Are* You?

Personal Branding—Is What We See, What We Get?

by Sharon J. Geraghty, AICI FLC

*W*E LIVE in a world of illusion, and we are judged each day based on other people's perceptions. This is both good news and bad news! You cannot control someone else's perception. You can, however, control the image you want them to receive by being aware of what you are projecting about yourself. The best way to accomplish this is by knowing who you are. When you know who you are, you become confident, and self-confidence is the key to your personal style. From an inside-out viewpoint, knowing who you are shapes your personal brand.

When you grasp who you are, you can translate this image outwardly. As characters in a play define their roles with costumes and a script, you, too, play a role in your daily life, complete with your own appropriate garments and personal script. Your grooming, clothing and accessories speak long before you do. Your choices for color, fit and appropriateness help others decide if you are someone with whom they want to establish a relationship. This means your visual presence:

- Can help you accomplish your goals and communicate your vision and purpose.
- Must reflect your values while projecting your passions.

- Needs to convey your commitment to communicate an authentic visual presence as accurately as your words and actions.

As simple as the question, “Who Are You?” is, the response will require you to think about and answer many questions about yourself.

Personal Branding—What Do You Stand For?

Your *vision* is the way you would like to see the world according to your beliefs and expected outcomes. My vision is a world where everyone is able to project confidence based on self-awareness, creating happiness and fostering harmony.

What is your vision?

Your *purpose* is how you see yourself in a role that contributes to the outcome of your vision. For me, my purpose is to act as an agent for change resulting in challenging assumptions on personal and social levels.

What is your purpose?

Your *goals* are the action steps you will take to fulfill your purpose by focusing your time and energy. Here are some of my goals:

- Become a keynote speaker on the topic of translating inner qualities to outward appearance.
- Create five workshop modules that empower individuals to become self-aware and self-confident on three different levels.
- Work with clients that are motivated to reinvent themselves.

What are your goals?

By identifying your *values* and *passions*, you can make more meaningful life choices. Your *values* express those qualities that are important to you and guide you in finding organizations and people who support and share these and similar qualities. Your *passions* are those activities that energize you. They provide a clear way of measuring whether or not you are in the “right place” with the “right people.” By “right,” I mean you are stimulated by your choices, and the people around you either share or respect your passionate commitment.

- My values are compassion, connection, beauty, learning and teaching.
- My passions are designing/creating clothing and accessories, porcelain doll making and costuming, interior decorating, watercolor painting, and reading.

What are your values and passions?

What do you stand for? Companies spend quite a bit of money and time determining the qualities their products and services convey to consumers. Their *brand* is what they stand for. By purchasing and using their products and services, you are dedicating your time and money to that brand and supporting their effort in continuing to offer these products and services. Choosing how you spend your money and time is your power as a consumer.

Now, apply this same process to yourself. Concentrate on your strengths—your natural gifts and talents. When you maximize your strengths, you work effortlessly. Contrary to the perception that there is value in addressing weaknesses, I believe, along with a growing number of career specialists, that focusing on strengths results in stronger, beneficial outcomes.

My strengths are innovative problem solving, effective communicating, close attention to detail, good with color, have a “good eye,” artistic.

According to William Arruda and Kirsten Dixson, authors of *Career Distinction*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007, your personal brand is your “unique promise of value.” People will come to expect this from you, and you will become known for it.

Start by listing all the similarities you believe you have in common with your peers and competitors. Then, list all the ways in which you are different from them. This will reveal what makes you unique. *You will be able to use this information to make choices that translate your uniqueness into your appearance and behavior.* Revealing your values and passions will help you define your personal brand, which will in turn, allow you to express to others who you are and what they can expect from you.

Brand Attributes. Brand attributes are the adjectives used by you and others to describe you. Assessment tools for career and self-evaluation are helpful in determining whether others see you in the same way you see yourself. My top five brand attributes are:

Self-Assessment

Entrepreneurial
Self-motivated
Passionate
Visionary
Creative

Others’ Assessments

Creative
Entrepreneurial
Intelligent
Enterprising
Passionate

Note the words in italics. Three of them appear in both columns. The way I see myself and the way others see me are in high correlation.

If you discover that the correlation is not high for you, consider how you will make changes, so others will begin to view you as you view yourself.

An excellent exercise you can do is writing an introduction for yourself as if you would be introduced to a group of people. Ask a colleague, friend or family member to do the same for you and compare them. You will understand how others perceive you, and you can make changes according to the image you intend to project.

Personal Brand Statement. Your brand statement will remind you of your purpose, serve as a guide for life decisions and provide criteria for setting priorities. You can use it to communicate to others who you are and what you stand for. Make it be consistent with your vision and purpose, ensure it reflects your values and passions and includes your unique brand attributes. Create one sentence that will describe the value you offer, whom it is intended for and what makes you different.

My Personal Brand Statement is “Using my enterprising spirit, creative visioning and compassion for people, I support entrepreneurs and professionals by raising their self-awareness, increasing their self-confidence and translating their appearance into a polished presence.”

Personal Brand Profile. Expanding your personal brand statement into a personal brand profile gives you a resource with which to develop your resume, elevator pitch, bio and website content. You have already created your personal brand profile while moving through the process of discovering who you are. It includes your vision, purpose, goals, values, passions, attributes and strengths.

Here is my Personal Brand Profile:

Sharon uses an inside-out approach to image consulting that results in raising self-awareness in her clients. She believes that the alignment of

inner qualities and outer appearance generates the emergence of self-confidence. Self-confidence, in turn, allows for the development of personal style and in the context of the whole person—a personal brand.

“Know, first, who you are, and then adorn yourself accordingly.”

–Epictetus, Greek sage and Stoic philosopher

Using the information in this section, create your Personal Brand Profile.

Communicating Your Brand

Visual Presence. Creating a “personal style statement” will motivate your choices in clothing, hairstyle and accessories. Creating this type of statement involves turning your attention outward. This is different from generating your personal brand statement, where you turned your focus inward. Choose public figures you admire and identify those qualities that best describe them. You have discerned these qualities from the outside in. From your list, choose two or three words that embody the image you wish to project. With dictionary in hand, analyze the significance of those qualities by discovering exactly what those words mean.

In order to differentiate yourself, ensure that the qualities you choose correlate with your appearance and image. There would be a different perception of a person whose personal style statement is, “I leave an impression of elegance and sophistication” and one whose is “I project a credible and confident image.” While they may each be wearing suits, the former would be in a lighter color or black and would be cut more fashionably than the later.

Verbal Presence. Learning to state what you want, rather than what you do not want, sends a positive message. Change “I don’t like the way you are answering the phone” to “In the future, I would like you to answer the phone by saying, ‘Thank you for calling La Bella Figura. How may I help you?’”

Imagine how you might transform your everyday conversations into powerful declarations. Whenever you find yourself using the word “should,” try substituting “would” or “might.” For example, say, “I would be grateful if . . .” or “You might try . . .” or “I am hoping that . . .” These phrases state your intention or expectation in a positive way.

In establishing your personal brand of communication, carefully evaluate what you say and how you say it. Your words will define you. Let’s see how this applies to making requests, which is one of the more important times you speak. Here is a simple method to get what you want when you want it.

You, as the “speaker” make a request of another person, the “listener.” There must be a shared understanding of the key elements of the request and criteria with which the speaker will be satisfied and by when. Be certain the shared understandings are identified and defined.

Father to his son: “Nick, please stop by the pet store and buy dog food on your way home from work today.”

Elements of the Request

Speaker: Father

Listener: Nick

Shared understanding(s): Both understand which pet store. Both know what type of dog food their dog eats. Both know what time Nick usually leaves work.

The speaker will be satisfied if: Nick brings home the proper dog food.

By when: After work today.

Lack of clarity will cause a communication breakdown. Without the above-stated shared understanding(s), which pet store may need to be agreed upon, as well as the quantity, brand, type, style, and size of the

dog food may need to be discussed. An alternate plan may need to be developed if Nick ends up working late and the store closes before he can get there. Many considerations must be accounted for. Missing elements in the request will cause confusion.

Non-Verbal Presence. In all cases, your body language will reveal how your words are aligned with your feelings and can highlight inconsistencies if you do not own the words you are speaking. Body language either reinforces or contradicts your words.

Your posture, gestures, facial expressions and eye movements are non-verbal ways in which your body may consciously or unconsciously agree or disagree with your words in subtle ways. When attempting to interpret body language, be aware that many movements can be misinterpreted based on cultural differences and environmental conditions. If your thoughts and words agree, your body movement will follow naturally, sending a complete message to your partner.

Personal space and the distance with which you allow others to enter that space signals the type of relationships you have or would like to have with them. There is an *intimate* zone reserved for family members, a *personal* zone used while having conversations with people you know, a *social* zone for new acquaintances or strangers and a *public* zone in place for speeches and lectures. When these zones are transgressed on any level, you may feel a need to protect yourself as you may feel threatened or dominated. Conversely, a person invading or retreating from your personal space may be signaling to you a request for a change in the relationship by moving closer or further away. Remember, culturally, personal space requirements will vary.

Several facial expressions have become universally identified and remain consistently recognized across all cultures. They are happiness,

sadness, fear, disgust, surprise and anger along with smiling and frowning. Keep in mind, it may be inappropriate to show emotion facially in some situations.

Clusters of body language signals will always provide a more reliable source of interpretation than single signals. Arms folded across your upper body may signal defensiveness on its own. However, it may also be a result of the cold room temperature. Crossed arms and crossed legs may appear to convey a defensive message, or you may just be trying to keep your balance in an armless chair while protecting your personal space in a cold, crowded lecture room. As you can see, body language also depends on context as these signals could have an entirely different meaning in different situations. Eyes, eyebrows, mouth, head, hands, arms, legs and feet, along with proximity, all play a part in the not-so-exact science of reading body language.

Online Presence. Reaching a wider audience is literally at your fingertips by engaging with the Internet. Your personal or business website is best offered as an informational, inspirational and motivational representation of who you are. This is your first building block in the online foundation of your brand both personally and professionally. Be sure your graphic and virtual identities are consistent across all marketing tools, either in print or online.

Facebook®, LinkedIn® and Twitter® allow you to network with large audiences, increase your sphere of influence and reinforce your personal brand. You want to use these tools to build a larger word-of-mouth network. Choose the tools that best serve you and your brand.

- Facebook is a *personal* social tool allowing you to communicate with friends and family. A Facebook fan page is a *business* social tool with which you communicate your business or organization's brand to fans in an *informal* way. I prefer to keep my friends and family audience separate from my business audience.

- LinkedIn is a *business* social tool that allows you to present your personal and company brands in a *formal* way on a premier networking site. I use LinkedIn to make my profession known to others to generate business contacts and contracts.
- Twitter is a communication tool. In a business context, you can announce special events, press releases, discounts and free offers. I use Twitter to remind followers about events I am attending or sponsoring or new services and products I am offering.

Blogging is about revealing your passions. Determine whether your medium is writing or talking and then write or video blog accordingly about what excites you. Your personality and expertise will shine through, and people will learn more about you. You will expand your brand. Remember, link your blog to your website to expand your brand profile.

Maintaining Your Brand

Observe whether you are “on brand” at all times. Being on brand will challenge you to clearly, consistently and constantly choose to purchase, use, and by influence, recommend products and services you find appealing. Your online presence and professional and personal affiliations also contribute to your brand. By keeping all of these components in alignment with the image you are projecting, you will present a sense of congruency and establish a brand trajectory consistent with your vision.

As your awareness of who you are becomes more apparent, your brand will require periodic reviews.

- Consider and implement changes to update and evolve your brand. As you gather new responsibilities or offer new products and services, your brand will need to reflect them. Add new information

to your bio and update your online presence, logo, font or colors. Consider replacing clothing, accessories, office and technology tools and other objects that no longer suit you. Clothing and accessories may need to become more age appropriate or brought in line with a new position.

- Acquire feedback from people within your sphere of influence. Allow your image to project your growth and evolution. Now is the time to reassess yourself and have others reassess you. Allow at least six months to have passed for people you see daily and weekly. Allow twelve months for those you see monthly and quarterly. At these points, you will be able to assess whether your newly branded image is on target.
- Review your professional and personal affiliations with groups and organizations—your social capital. If you find that attending these meetings and events has become an obligation or that you are not attending regularly, investigate other associations that may be more stimulating to you.
- Analyze your daily activities across the broad spectrum of pursuing your goals, fulfilling your purpose and realizing your vision. Regularly make at least one effective decision or perform one important activity that moves you or your business forward on a variety of levels.

Are you are looking for your first job or returning to the workplace after raising children? Do you want to change careers or employers? Do you currently own a business or are you considering starting one? Is it simply time to reinvent yourself? Discovering your signature style and developing your personal brand will contribute invaluablely to your success. Begin now and realize the benefits throughout your life.



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*L*A BELLA FIGURA is an Italian expression that means *to present yourself in your best light, to leave a good impression*. Owner and founder of La Bella Figura and certified image consultant Sharon Geraghty offers a total package of services in appearance, behavior and communication. She supports entrepreneurs and professionals using an inside-out approach to help them develop a personal style in the context of the whole person—a personal brand. Sharon is particularly interested in helping individuals reinvent themselves.

An effective communicator and relationship builder, Sharon inspires and motivates with a positive attitude and perceptive insight. She successfully guides clients in innovative ways through transition stages of their lives, both professionally and personally. She offers individual consultations and group presentations on a variety of life transforming topics.

Married for 24 years to a successful business consultant, Sharon is the mother to two, talented, adult children. She has navigated through her life in a way that has brought her a breadth and depth of experience that she shares with her clients. She currently serves as a board member of the Chicago Midwest chapter of AICI.

“Socially Smart and Savvy is a must have resource for anyone who wants to be a leader in their field, be influential in their social circle and be the kind of person other people want to be around. These top experts share what you want to know to build the skills that will get you to the front of the line where ever you go.”

—Deborah King, AICI CIP, CPC, founder of the Final Touch Finishing School and Global Protocol, Etiquette & Civility Academy

Being Socially Smart and Savvy is much more than handing out business cards or knowing which fork to use at a formal dinner. It is about creating a consistently recognizable personal brand, communicating effectively, building a network you can rely on and presenting the right image every time.

This incredible resource is packed with great ideas to make you socially smart and savvy. Whether you are an experienced professional, a new college graduate just starting out in a new leadership role, you are about to discover how to maximize your image and leverage your contacts to grow and prosper personally and professionally.

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