



The PSA

The Association for Secretaries and Office Professionals

2003 NATIONAL OFFICE PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR COMPETITION



Presentation by

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Good morning Members of the Panel.

I am Sharonette Webb Secretary to Mr James Mlawu, Chief Director for Strategic Planning at our Provincial Department of Transport. We work from Department of Transport Head Office in Pietermaritzburg. I come from the private sector to government and Mr Mlawu and I have worked together for 18 months and I love my job.

My topic for today is the “**Power of Your Professional Image**”.

THE POWER OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

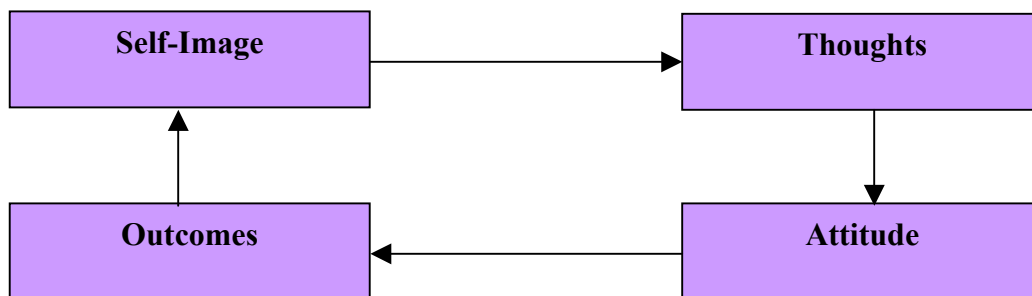
1. INTRODUCTION

A powerful image of yourself affects the way you act, the way you conduct business and crucially the way you think about yourself. The quality of our self-image – positive or negative – is central to our potential for success. Successful individuals and businesses always have a strong self-image; they believe without any doubt at all that they can reach their goals.

They can because they believe they can. Virgil (c.70-19 B.C.) Roman poet

Self-image is actually a collection of ideas you have about yourself that you believe to be true, even if they are not. These ideas begin in early childhood with impressions given to us by the significant people in our lives as well as other outside sources. The beliefs we have about our abilities determine our self-image. Many of our daily decisions are based on information about ourselves that we have accepted as true. Since we will always act in a manner that is in direct proportion to our self-image, we can change what's happening in our lives by changing the picture. Self-image is a process illustrated:

THE PROCESS



Positive Action Steps In Moulding Your Self Image

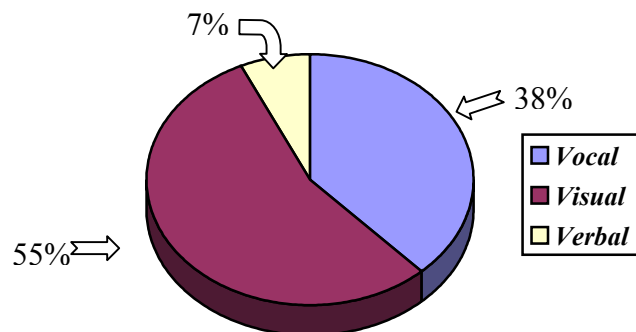
The following action steps are imperative in promoting your self-image:

- **Acknowledge** – be aware that you always talk to yourself;
- **Assess** – evaluate each statement that you say to yourself;
- **Revise** – reword what you say to yourself to support you in your flight towards your highest aspirations; and
- **Rewrite** – re-write your self-talk to change habits, alter your temperament, build a winning personality, and attain meaningful goals.

Clothes have an enormous influence on how other people perceive us. The image we project through our visible appearance is the first message we send in any new situation. Looking the part is just as important as being the part.

In any situation, it is often what you don't say that has more impact than what you do say. Once you look the part, and you feel comfortable with what you are wearing, you need to assess how you express yourself with your **body**. The way you walk, move, sit and conduct yourself, all has an impact on your portrayed image. **Good posture** is a vital ingredient to portraying a professional image.

Your **voice** is an integral part of your total presentation and you need to stop and listen to yourself speak to evaluate your voice. If you speak with feeling and not in monotone, clearly pronouncing your words and speak with warmth and enthusiasm you portray your professionalism. Your image is designed by other's perception of you:



Not only is self-image a product of human relations but it also has a profound effect on how we relate and get along with others.

2. SETTING AND ACHIEVING OF POWERFUL GOALS

A goal is a statement of what one wishes to accomplish, acquire or achieve. To ensure success in life, we must learn to set goals. Effective goal setting can be compared to the work of an artist – an artist decides entirely on his own whether he wants to paint a bright, lively masterpiece or a dull, lifeless and average picture. In the same respect, it is up to you whether or not you use all the opportunities and capabilities available to you to build a bright and successful life. You can only do this through effective goal setting.

Making goals is a choice. If we choose to set goals we will create opportunities for ourselves, we will feel good about ourselves and succeed in everything we do.

Successful Goals are **SMART** Goals:

- **Specific** : Goals need to be specific and defined;
- **Measurable** : Goals need to be measurable so that we can identify if, and when they have been accomplished;
- **Attainable** : Goals need to be attainable,
- **Realistic** : Goals must be realistic in keeping with our own individual potentials, limitations and resources; and
- **Timed** : Goals need to have times scheduled to them so that there is a definite point by when the goal will be achieved so that you can move to the next goal.

The ability to define a goal is part of what makes winners. Winners have the same opportunities in life but are distinguished through their way of *thinking*, and their *attitude*. You have absolute control over both your thought and your attitude.

It is only when we have a clearly defined goal that we are able to take advantage of random chances, because it is only then that we recognise the opportunity they offer.

Opportunities pass, they don't pause. (Anon)

It is our choice whether we want to seize the opportunities presented to us.

The Manner In Which To Achieve Powerful Goals

To achieve powerful goals we need to:

- **look at our Current Circumstances:** We need a map to enable us to see where we are and where we want to go. In other words, what does your life look like today? Where do you want to be in the future, i.e. what are you aiming for? This is a simple way of collecting and organising your thoughts.
- **Goals:** Goals must carry enough weight to make them a true value to you. You will want your goals for amongst other things to stimulate creativity, moving ahead in your career, getting organised, tapping internal resources, and so on.
- **Action plans:** Align goals with your values, and create a visual image of what you want to achieve. It is essential to devise an action plan. An action plan is simply a list of all the necessary steps and successive actions involved in achieving your goal, allowing you to pursue each step as a separate project. It must be written, organised and the list you make needs to include everything that will be required in order to accomplish this goal.
- **Daily activities:** All goals can be accomplished by breaking them down into bite-size, manageable action items and then taking steps daily. By including your top goal activities on your daily to-do list, you are more likely to take them seriously and eventually achieve them.
- **Record of Accomplishments:** You need to go over your goals, plans, and activities, and assess your progress. Write down your accomplishments in each area and enjoy the great feeling that goes with achieving. By analysing the results of your recorded accomplishments you will have a clear picture of the direction you are moving in.
- **Rewards:** It is time to celebrate and enjoy your success! If you nurture yourself in this way you will feel encouraged and refreshed.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF SUCCESS

The root of success is not found in the way you work, but in the way you think.

Success is not a matter of luck – it’s a matter of design. Winners don’t get more opportunities – they create them. If you truly want your life to take the direction of success and happiness, you need to make a real commitment, have an unquenchable self-belief, feel a passion for what you are aiming for, and never take your eyes off your goal. Remember, success attracts success and the more it attracts, the stronger and more powerful its force. When you focus on all your positive qualities, as well as your past and present achievements, you are guaranteed to attract success.

Your success is your responsibility. It isn’t anyone else’s. Success is not something you will someday “arrive” at. Every day there are opportunities to enjoy little accomplishments and discover ways to be truly happy.

Some people make things happen, some watch things happen, and some wonder what happened.

Anon

Success only begins to happen when you have a strong self-belief and the passion to succeed, and are prepared to pass through your fears and learn from the experience. Acting assertively and with self-confidence also makes you feel in control and allows you to proceed with boldness to attain the life you want. You can only achieve success through determining what would bring you happiness and fulfilment.

You have complete power over your choices. You can choose whether an opportunity is going to be seized by you, whether you want to get over a failure and move on, and so on. When you succeed it affects your value, your confidence and your competence.

Life is dynamic and always in a state of change.

You have to know how to let go of the past and move on to something new. (Anon)

With belief in your abilities you will be certain about your decisions and actions.

4. MAKING AN ACTION PLAN FOR REACHING DESIRED GOALS

An Action Plan is the practicalities to reach your goals.

Once your goals have been written down and you have created a burning desire to achieve them, it is time to devise a plan that will lead you to the fulfilment of your goals. Your written plan must be distinctly laid out, it must guide you, one step at a time towards the realisation of your goal.

An action plan is critical to motivate and orientate you to goal achievement. It needs to be written, structured and specific and there needs to be real commitment, unquenchable self-belief and a passion for what your goals are. You need to think of what needs to be done and by when. Goals need to be broken down into manageable action steps, making them specific, measurable and achievable.

Successful people have the ability to take effective action and make things happen for themselves. They choose to take hold of an opportunity. We need to feel good about who we are and that we can and will achieve our goals.

Analogy to my work environment: An action plan can be likened to the road signs that guide us along the journey to our destination. Written plans, like road signs, will keep us on the right road to our final objective. They will show us the easiest route to get there. They will let us know how far we have travelled and how much further we have to go. They also warn and prepare us for possible danger ahead.

A written plan helps us to organise our life and make better use of the time needed to reach our ideal life. Planning is a natural process of success.

A well thought out plan of action is usually necessary to become motivated toward goal achievement. Planning keeps you oriented toward the future and allows you to gauge both short- and long-term goal efforts and accomplishments. Keep your plan simple. The action steps you build in, will allow you to measure progress towards your goal. When devising your plan, there are two simple questions that you need to answer: where do you want to go, and when do you want to arrive there?

The written plan is a guide to which you can return daily to examine your progress and, if necessary, make changes. If any part of your plan is not working, examine why and change it. The important thing is to be able to learn from your mistakes. An example of an Action Plan is:

Write down the **goal** – e.g. to attend the SAPRO symposium at Alpine Heath in the Drakensberg during October.

What needs to happen (tasks to reach your goal) – a) need to get the brochure from Siyanqoba re the Symposium.

b) need to ascertain if funds are available to attend the course.

c) need to forward a submission with motivation to my manager.

d) and so on.

When should be addressed where timeframes are set to each task so that progress can be gauged.

e.g. the Symposium is from the 15th to 17th October 2003 and all the tasks need to be scheduled to allow enough time to ensure that all arrangements can be timeously made.

To be successful an Action Plan must be shared by those that matter.

5. MAINTAINING A SCHEDULE FOR SUCCESS ATTAINMENT

Success attainment is achieved through planning. Having a comprehensive strategy is a powerful way to ensure that you don't overwhelm yourself by trying to take on too much. *"It's not so much how busy you are, but why you are busy. The bee is praised; the mosquito is swatted"* Marie O'Connor.

There are four main aspects for success attainment.

- Where you are now?
- Where you want to go?
- How will you get there?
- How long should it take?

This schedule needs to be updated and consulted regularly. Your planning should also incorporate your opportunities and choices. Success involves keeping your life in balance, developing perspective and having a vision of what you want your life to be like.

To succeed and know you are succeeding, you need to:

- Keep a success journal to record accomplishments at the end of each day;
- Recognise your achievements;
- Keep a file of congratulatory letters, thank you cards and notes of appreciation and re-read them when you need a boost;
- Associate with confident people who share your goals and can encourage you;
- Look your best at all times;
- Put written reminders and affirmations on cue-cards and posting them where you can see them regularly; and
- Give credit where credit is due.

6. ANALYSING AND DEVELOPING YOUR CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE SKILLS

You need to transform your state of mind to be instantaneously positive and empowered, enabling you to attract the things you want from life. You need to remove all negative and limiting thoughts from your mind for good.

Innovation will promote and increase personal talents and creativity. Innovation develops the skills of flexibility and enthusiasm and will lead to a better life quality, greater self esteem, increased confidence, positive thoughts and an increase in positive outcomes.

AN INNOVATION PLAN

(New Or Implemented)

- Describe what is your new or improvement idea?
- What are/were the benefits or results expected?
- What constraints or obstacles must be/were overcome?
- How do/did you plan to implement the proposal? Attach a detailed implementation plan
- Results achieved (Attach documentation).
- Date implemented.

“Wisdom comes from experience, skill from practice.” (Anonymous)

We show our creativity through our professionalism. As a woman we need to make time to grow our creative and innovative skills amidst our functions of wife, mother, lover, professional, and so on and all the other demands placed on us.

Each person is unique in his or her creativity and innovation. To develop your creative and innovative skills you need to have the necessary knowledge and experience, have the belief that comes from the heart and put it into practice.

7. CONCLUSION

There is a giant asleep within every man. When the giant awakes, miracles happen.

Frederick Faust (1892 – 1944), aka Max Brand, American screenwriter

The *Power of Your Professional Image* is made up of a number of various aspects and can only be achieved through your choices, through your thoughts and attitude and self-image.

*If you think you are beaten, you are;
If you think you dare not, you don't;
If you'd like to win, but think you can't;
It's almost a cinch you won't.*

*If you think you'll lose, you've lost;
For out in the world we find
Success begins with a fellow's will.
It's all in the state of mind.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man;
But soon or late the man who wins
Is the one who thinks he can.
(Anonymous)*

Thank you

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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