

# ST SUNDAY TIMES APPOINTMENTS

MAKING OPPORTUNITIES KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR

## Making a great first impression

It takes just a quick glance, maybe three seconds, for someone to evaluate you when you meet for the first time. In this short time, the other person forms an opinion about you based on your appearance, your body language, your demeanor, your mannerisms, and how you are dressed.

With every new encounter, you are evaluated and yet another person's impression of you is formed. These first impressions can be nearly impossible to reverse or undo, making those first encounters extremely important, for they set the tone for the all the relationships that follows.

So, whether they are in your career or social life, it's important to know how to create a good first impression. This article provides some useful tips to help you do this.

### Be on Time

The person you are meeting for the first time is not interested in your "good excuse" for running late. Plan to arrive a few minutes early. And allow flexibility for possible delays in traffic or taking a wrong turn. Arriving early is much better than arriving late, hands down, and is the first step in creating a great first impression.

### Present Yourself Appropriately

Of course physical appearance matters. The person you are meeting for the first time does not know you and your appearance is usually the first clue he or she has to go on.

But it certainly does not mean you need to look like a model to create a strong and positive first impression. (Unless you are interviewing with your local model agency, of course!)

No. The key to a good impression is to present yourself appropriately.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and so the "picture" you first present says much about you to the person you are meeting. Is your appearance saying the right things to help create the right first impression?

Start with the way you dress. What is the appropriate dress for the meeting or occasion? In a business setting, what is the appropriate business attire? Suit, blazer, casual? And ask yourself what the person you'll be meeting is likely to wear - if your contact is in advertising or the music industry, a pin-stripe business suit may not strike the right note!

For business and social meetings, appropriate dress also varies between countries and cultures, so it's something that you should pay particular attention to when in an unfamiliar setting or country. Make sure you know the traditions and norms.

And what about your personal grooming? Clean and tidy appearance is appropriate for most business and social occasions. A good haircut or shave. Clean and tidy clothes. Neat and tidy make up. Make sure your grooming is appropriate and helps make you feel "the part".

Appropriate dressing and grooming help make a good first impression and also help you feel "the part", and so feel more calm and confident. Add all of this up and you are well on your way to creating a good first impression.

### A Word about Individuality

The good news is you can usually create a good impression without total conformity or losing your individuality. Yes, to make a good first impression you do need to "fit in" to some degree. But it all goes back to being appropriate for the situation. In a business setting, wear appropriate business attire. If at a formal evening social event, wear appropriate evening attire. And express your individuality appropriately within that context.

### A Winning Smile!

"Smile and the world smiles too." So there's nothing like a smile to create a good first impression. A warm and confident smile will put both you and the other person at ease. So smiling is a winner when it comes to great first impressions. But don't go over-



board with this - people who take this too far can seem insincere and smarmy, or can be seen to be "lightweights".

### Be Open and Confident

When it comes to making the first impression, body language as well as appearance speaks much louder than words. Use your body language to project appropriate confidence and self-assurance. Stand tall, smile (of course), make eye contact, greet with a firm handshake. All of this will help you project confidence and encourage

both you and the other person feel better at ease.

### Small Talk Goes a Long Way...

Conversations are based on verbal give and take. It may help you to prepare questions you have for the person you are meeting for the first time beforehand. Or, take a few minutes to learn something about the person you meet for the first time before you get together. For instance, does he play golf? Does she work with a local charitable foundation?

Is there anything that you know of that you have in common with the person you are meeting? If so,

this can be a great way to open the conversation and to keep it flowing.

### Be Positive

Your attitude shows through in everything you do. Project a positive attitude, even in the face of criticism or in the case of nervousness. Strive to learn from your meeting and to contribute appropriately, maintaining an upbeat manner and a smile.

### Be Courteous And Attentive

It goes without saying that good manners and polite, attentive and courteous behavior

help make a good first impression. In fact, anything less can ruin the one chance you have at making that first impression. So be on your best behavior!

One modern manner worth mentioning is "turn off your mobile phone". What first impression will you create if you are already speaking to someone other than the person you are meeting for the first time? Your new acquaintance deserves 100% of your attention. Anything less and you'll create a less

than good first impression.

### Key Points

You have just a few seconds to make a good first impression and it's almost impossible ever to change it. So it's worth giving each new encounter your best shot. Much of what you need to do to make a good impression is speaking to someone other than the person you are meeting for the first time? Your new acquaintance deserves 100% of your attention. Anything less and you'll create a less

## Are you a man or a mouse?



Admit it. You've thought about joining Leo Burnett more than once. But you've also heard about the tough deadlines, long hours, demanding clients, high standards and the formidable team of professionals whose expectations you fear you might not be able to match-up to.

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who's nothing short of a born leader, unafraid to take charge, with around 5 years experience in advertising, marketing or a related field. You should also be operationally efficient and strategically sound, holding either a degree, or part/full qualification from CIM.

### BRAND EXECUTIVE

with tons of energy, a "just do it" spirit, and the willingness to be moulded into a top professional. A methodical, strategic-thinking mind and excellent organisational skills will stand you in good stead to run the course.

### PROJECT COORDINATOR

with 2 - 3 years experience in the marketing field; preferably advertising. The ability to get things done, and manage clients and project assignments on your own is a must. A good command of both English and Sinhala, and a marketing-related qualification will earn you extra points.

### PR EXECUTIVES - SENIOR & MID-LEVEL

with impeccable writing skills, and the ability to liaise with high-profile clients and the media alike. You would also need to be operationally efficient, possessing the ability to juggle multiple projects with critical deadlines.

### PR COORDINATOR

who is prepared to be kept on their toes documenting material, compiling coverage reports and press lists, dispatching releases, assisting at press conferences, and basically pitching-in where needed. Numeracy, organisation and good people skills - particularly with the media - are all required for this job.

Please post or e-mail your resume to:

### Nedra Dewapura

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Leo Burnett Solutions Inc.  
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Colombo 3

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Quiche-eaters need not apply.



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