



## Reputation Management –Building Your Brand!

People are often surprised by what they hear that has been said behind their backs.....! I emphasize as part of my Reputation Management theme, the better one manages their reputation, the less likely such surprises will occur.

So what comprises a reputation? I stress it is so much more than one's professional expertise and academic accomplishments. It includes attitude, approachability, verbal presence, sense of style, reliability, attention to detail, kindness, flexibility, global awareness, business etiquette usage, ability to mix and mingle, etc.

We admire those who always seem to know what to say and how to say it and we cringe as we hear someone put their foot in their mouth. We are thankful for those who deliver as promised, but our stress levels increase while waiting for those who repeatedly give excuses.

We enjoy working among those with positive, can-do attitudes as we attempt to avoid the whiners, mean-spirited and snarky people.

Approachable people make us feel welcomed and acknowledged as their body language is inclusive rather than avoidant or arrogant.

And wow, do certain people own the room and the moment with their commanding, confident presence; whether giving a presentation or working the room, they are in their element.

And as I stress, diplomacy isn't just for diplomats. People who carefully weigh their words for tact and tone give themselves a distinct advantage. In today's world of increased brevity, basic verbal courtesy is almost a thing of the past.

As society has become increasingly salacious with a newfound sense of entitlement that includes knowing everything about everyone, protecting one's reputation has become even more an area of concern.

My top ten list of items that people notice, talk about and will impact your brand include:

1. Are you comfortable mixing and mingling?  
Turning small talk into a big advantage.
2. Do you recognize non-verbal communication signals in yourself and others?  
Pumping up the volume without saying a word.
3. Do you communicate effectively, with words that send the right message?  
Using language to build bridges.
4. Do you “demonstrate” the best of everyday etiquette?  
“Introducing” sure-fire leading behaviors.
5. Are you “in the know” – current, contemporary and globally savvy?  
Life-long learning that will take you the distance.
6. Are your presentation skills on point?  
Conquering the conference room and captivating your audience.
7. Are you confident and comfortable with business entertainment?  
Thinking on your feet (and outside of the box) out of the office.
8. Are technology tools your friends or foes?  
Social networking and texting and IMing (oh my.)
9. Do you have the “it” factor...gravitas?  
Time “telling” tips to reduce stress in yourself and others.
10. Does your appearance convey the right professional image?  
Seeing it, BEING it (and how it looks in the rearview mirror).

Deborah Thomas-Nininger is the founder of DTN Productions International, a training company that provides training on all areas of international and domestic protocol specializing in "Reputation Management" soft skills and communication strategies. She brings to you over twenty years of business etiquette, communication and self-presentation expertise, rooted in behavioral science and successful human interaction. Ms. Thomas-Nininger organized the international etiquette training for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta and is a frequent subject of interviews, which often appear in publications both nationally and internationally. The DTN staff continues to spread throughout the world their contemporary approach to business and social courtesies via seminars, workshops, keynotes, webinars and podcasts.

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