



PROFESSIONAL INSIGHT

I was just watching a TV ad last night that showed an attractive real estate woman with her clients in a big fancy house. And she looked every inch like what people think we should look like. You know, perfectly cut and styled hair, professional make up, tasteful and expensive jewelry, a couture business suit, high heels and a clipboard. Now, I know we all don't look that way, but there is a perception of us as well groomed, confident and professional women. A confident man well dressed could be in any profession; lawyer, CPA, doctor ... however, when a woman is dressed as above and matched with a profession, it's usually real estate sales. Has anyone ever said to you, "You just look like a real estate agent or something!"

Then at the far range of the scale are the other "typical" real estate women. Like the one in the movie "Wall Street" selling Charlie

Sheen's character a Manhattan high rise condo. She's shrewd, calculating, over talkative, badgering and threatens him to make a decision, because she has another showing at 2:00pm and doesn't want to waste her time!

She's confident, yes, she's dressed expensively, yes, in tweeds, fur collar and heels, but because she's not a classy professional INSIDE it comes off all wrong. So where does the class come from? Is it the clothes? No. Is it the clipboard or brief case? No.

It's professional insight. It's our ability to see how we come across – we intuitively know whether a conversation is a pleasant one or not. We are able to read our clients, listen to them, adapt and respond with maturity and wisdom. We reserve our opinions and responses until an appropriate time, always dancing a dance with the client. First listen, then speak, then listen, then speak. Respect, tolerance and kindness are essentials to a class presentation. That's what makes you a professional.

Now, on the other hand, I've seen agents painstakingly dress for work like they are going out to a fancy society luncheon, dressing for glamour instead of for business. And also, the agents who erroneously think they should dress as "down and casual" as their clients. I ask you, how would you feel going to see your attorney or surgeon if all they wore were sweats and sneakers? It absolutely undermines your authority and credibility if you look like you'd rather stay home and watch TV all day or go to the gym instead of work. And that also goes for being dressed too sexy. Professional women should know better than to dress inappropriately for business. Low necklines, short shirts, see through anything, too tight tops. These have no place in a real estate environment where you are representing the most substantial investment most people will ever make. Show your female clients respect by dressing properly particularly when doing business with their husbands. I heard a wise woman once say "Ladies, remember what you're selling!"

What best identifies a real estate professional? It may start with a visual first impression, but then your engaging smile, firm handshake; eye contact and the calm tone of your voice take you the rest of the way. Knowing your business and articulating it clearly, honestly and ethically will you make you a woman in real estate that is known for her professionalism!

HOW DO SHAUNA AND CASEY KEEP THEIR PROFESSIONAL IMAGES CRISP, UNTARNISHED AND CLEARLY VISIBLE?



At the moment Shauna walks into a room, heads turn. She commands attention with her magnificent auburn hair, radiant smile and the way she carries herself. When she's wearing a light cotton dress, there isn't a more fresh-looking 32 year-old on the planet, and she knows it. After only a few weeks at Decade 22 Real Estate, Shauna had assembled a new wardrobe fit for any top real estate pro.

When picking up tips from co-workers, Shauna often found herself in the middle of gossip. She reasoned it just went along with the real estate business and, after all, it did give her something to talk about with her co-workers, especially during long hours at the office waiting for the phone to ring. She didn't see anything wrong with it – people get divorced, they have affairs, a child gets expelled from school, a couple files for bankruptcy – it's all a part of life. Then amidst all the banter things unraveled at a holiday party. Shauna never saw it coming.

It's no secret Shauna and her husband Clive, were having problems. His business had slowed and he took a pay cut. As money tightened, the stress took its toll on their relationship. They argued for an hour over \$400 Shauna spent on a dress and shoes for the party, but she just dug in her heels and refused to take them back. Secretly, Shauna planned to return them afterwards.

After all the dress compliments from partygoers and her "I told you so" stares at Clive, Shauna celebrated a little too much. Her crazy dancing, shrieks, and foul mouth gave an evening in suburbia quite a kick. The red wine on her dress may or may not come out, but Shauna sure had fun!

Outcome

Shauna will never really know the repercussions of her actions. Without her knowing, she had become the brunt of many wagging tongues and innuendo about her marriage. Her image was tarnished and she didn't even know it. Shauna doesn't understand why business has slacked off, but she guesses it's just the slow time of the year ... if she only knew the truth.



Right after Casey passed her real estate exam and started working at Excalibur Properties, she made up her mind to become the best she could because she had to. With her divorce finalized, her husband unable to make child support payments and her children relying on her for everything, Casey became an understudy to the top agents in her office.

She watched the personal interaction at first meetings between clients and agent and noticed how successful agents dressed and “carried” themselves. She listened to how they answered the phone and dealt with questions during negotiations. A few things jumped out right away, simple things that seemed to work and position a real estate agent as a pro. First, you only get one chance for a first impression so always dress one step up from the client and don’t wear anything too garish or loud. Keeping within her tight budget, Casey bought a few classic blazers and some classy accessories. Secondly, speak “low and slow”, something Casey practiced using a video camera.

Active listening and being “present” in conversations was something Casey did naturally, but she made sure she never faltered. Knowing her market? Well, Casey put a plan in place that’s viewed by everyone in and out of the office as the gold standard. At a client’s holiday party, Casey brought an antique Christmas ornament of a home and painted the hosts’ name on its front door. Each gift she sends contains a theme that reminds everyone of her, their local real estate pro.

Outcome

After only three years in the business, Casey knows it’s both the big things and the little things that matter. The couple that hosted the Christmas party already gave her two referrals, one for a listing and the other to represent a buyer. Of course, Casey sent a huge “thank-you” basket in gratitude. The business just keeps coming and that helps make Casey’s Christmas extra special for her children.

Working on your professionalism...

∞ DECIDE

How professional are you? Your success as a *professional* real estate woman is built upon your appearance, your conversation and your behavior. Remember, you have to “earn the right to wear sneakers”.

Answer these simple questions (circle one)

Does a “low and slow” voice build credibility?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

Do you have a plan to become more professional?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

Do you effectively communicate better through active listening and by asking questions?	Yes	No
---	-----	----

If you answered “No” to any of these questions, you need help and are ready to DARE to Be Professional. Now, go to the second step in the DARE Process and analyze your professionalism.



∞ ANALYZE

Does everything about you say you’re a Pro? Do clients trust you with the most important emotional and financial decision of their live? Do you measure up?

Rate Your APPEARANCE from 1-5, 5 being Best	Score
Wardrobe – How simple and classic are the styles I wear?	
Occasion – Do I always dress one step up from my clients at every occasion?	
Make-up – How natural and appealing does it look?	
Hair – How’s the color and style (is it non-faddish)?	
Accessories – How traditional and balanced is the “flair” I wear (jewelry, scarves, handbags)?	

Rate Your COMMUNICATIONS from 1-5, 5 being Best	Score
Voice – How low and slow (assured, professional) is your voice?	
Perspective – How well do your conversations focus on your client rather than you?	
Compliments – How often do you sincerely and freely give compliments?	
Questions – How well do you ask questions and really listen to the answers?	

Rate Your BEHAVIOR from 1-5, 5 being Best	Score
Expertise – How well do you know your market? (<i>See “Market Intuition” for a more detailed assessment</i>)	
Personality – How constant, upbeat and positive is your attitude?	
Dependability – How much can your clients rely upon you to be on time, follow through and meet deadlines?	
Calm confidence – How well do you exude self-confidence?	
TOTAL ALL SECTIONS	

Incredible!	41-50
Work on the few low scores	31-40
You’ve got some work to do	21-30
You have a lot to do	11-20
Ouch!	1-10

Now that you have a good idea of areas you need to work on, you’re ready for the next step in the DARE Process ... REALIZE.



∞ REALIZE

Be more Professional and reap continual rewards. Put together your plan to achieve Professional Insight and watch your business grow!

Focus on the Analyze areas where you scored a 3 or less and create a timetable for implementing suggestions listed below.

APPEARANCE

- ∞ **Wardrobe:** Eliminate patterns, add solids, and always have a blazer on hand. Think simple and classic styles.
- ∞ **Make-up:** Consult with a local department store specialist. Tell them what you need. Pull back to a more natural look.
- ∞ **Hair:** Ask advice from a hair stylist you DON'T use now – for color and style that exudes professionalism. Clip out some styles from magazines for comparison that you believe do the job.
- ∞ **Accessories:** Simple, classy, non-rattling – too much “bling” gives the wrong impression.

COMMUNICATION

- ∞ **Voice:** Tape record yourself doing a “walk-through” or client meeting and train yourself to speak “low and slow”.
- ∞ **Perspective:** Record a conversation with a client and count how often you use the word “I”. Replace the “I’s” with we or you.
- ∞ **Compliments:** Have 5 sincere kudos always ready.
- ∞ **Questions:** Ask 10 questions that probe the emotional, physical, and financial needs of your clients – and listen!

BEHAVIOR

- ∞ **Expertise:** Use the *Know Your Market* chapter in this book.
- ∞ **Personality:** Start your day with something that energizes you in a positive way.
- ∞ **Dependability:** Employ a simple day-timer, online reminder program and alarm clock.
- ∞ **Calm Confidence:** When you do things right, you’re in control and your clients know it.



➤ EVALUATE

How professional are you with your clients? Ask three clients about the following:

Your EXPERTISE from 1-5, 5 being Best	Score
Knowledge of “your market”	
Explanation of all procedures, paperwork and forms?	
Responsiveness to getting answers to your questions?	
Your PERSONALITY from 1-5, 5 being Best	Score
Upbeat, positive and energetic	
Appropriateness of your behavior	
Your COMMUNICATIONS from 1-5, 5 being Best	Score
Availability	
Listening skills	
Ability to inform	
Your APPEARANCE from 1-5, 5 being Best	Score
First impression	
Appropriateness of dress	
Professional look of hair and makeup	
Classiness	
Your DEPENDABILITY from 1-5, 5 being Best	Score
Timeliness	
Preparation	
Control of situations	
Confidence	

Two Final Questions that summarize it all:

1. *“Would you ask me to help you with your next real estate purchase or sale?”*
2. *“Based on our real estate experience together, would you recommend me to your family, neighbors or friends?”*

*Every 3 months, check your Professional Rating
Don't like how your clients rated you in specific areas?
Time to go back to Realize and initiate new changes.*



DARE TO BE PROFESSIONAL

- ∞ Create a presence that exudes professionalism with an appearance that signifies someone who is reliable and yet has some flair/distinction
- ∞ Practice your “low and slow” voice to reassure clients of their confidence in you
- ∞ Be on time and follow through, ask questions and actively listen





To establish oneself in the world,
one has to do all one can to
appear established.

Francois Rouchefoucauld

