



Building the Best Organizations in the Insurance Industry

BRANDING YOURSELF IN MID LIFE

Marva Goldsmith is a insightful writer who knows what it is to reinvent yourself as a older worker. Part of the game is how you look. Do you look 60 or 20? What is appropriate for a seasoned skilled worker to wear to a job interview? Her book on Branding Over 50 offers some insight. (Editor's Note)

"What does your packaging look like?"

Some think of image as something shallow or relating only to surface features, but as with commercial brands, personal branding includes the proper selection and construction of your personal brand packaging.

First impressions matter. You must take control of your appearance. People form opinions of you—right or wrong—within moments of meeting you. That means you can't afford to leave someone's impression of you up to chance.

Studies show that in the first 30 seconds of meeting you, people base their impression of you on this:

55% What they see

38% How you speak

7% What you say

We all know snap judgments can be wrong and unfair. Still, you can't ignore the reality: people form opinions based on the most minor details. More than half of what goes into forming someone's first impression of you happens even before you open your mouth. That's right: 55% of someone's initial response to you is based on visual cues. That could easily be a whole workbook in itself (check out *Spin Me: Creating the Image That Gets the Job; An Image Guide for Recent Grads and Job Hunters* at marvagoldsmith.com), but for the basics, here's a primer on what to consider, especially when going to an interview.

Clothing—People do judge books by their covers, every day. Make sure that your cover conveys the message you want people to remember. Here's a sample of messages that your clothing might be saying about you (whether you like it or not):

Tips for the 50+ job seeker

"You can't help getting older, but you don't have to get old."

—George Burns, Comedian

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First and foremost, if you purchased your interview suit in the 1900s...think about an upgrade. You must look current. Your clothing, your eyewear, and your hair must tell the story that you are current. That does not mean to dress like a youngster, only that you must appear up-to-date, interesting, fresh, competent, etc. Invest in an all-weather wool suit in navy blue or charcoal gray. For creative industries, you have more latitude with color. [Take the Career Skills Test for Free.](#)

Make a statement about your personality with your scarf choice and/or jewelry selection. Women especially can use jewelry to bring color and interest into the interview uniform. Earrings should not dangle and the jewelry should not make noise, as it can be distracting.

If your hair is silver, wear accents of blue or a French blue shirt to add vitality to your face. Depending on your personal coloring, a white shirt can drain the color from your face, leaving a “ghastly” appearance. If you have stark silver in your hair and the rest of your hair is black or very deep brown—avoid brown tones; the color will make your hair look dull.

And, what about a dye job? Only if you can get a professional to dye and maintain the look. Avoid stark colors, i.e., jet black at 62 years old. Use colors that look natural--including a little silver around the temples. Aim for a look that connotes vibrancy, vitality and health...and that does not necessarily require a dye job.

Before your interview, use Visine. Not only does it get the “red out,” it also whitens and adds a little sparkle.

If your teeth are stained, consider professional teeth cleaning or whitening. If that’s too expensive, then opt for some of the over-the-counter toothpaste whiteners.