



# Winning Ways

A publication of

## Winning Ways

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### Winning Ways is:

Joan Fletcher – President and Founder. Joan has over 20 years experience in business ownership and training. She is also a coveted and inspiring speaker. 703-273-9299

[jfletcher@winningwaysinc.com](mailto:jfletcher@winningwaysinc.com)

Betsy Hudson – VP of Business and Educational Development. Betsy is an experienced and inspirational trainer and manager in sales, marketing, and business development. 571-437-6192

[bhudson@winningwaysinc.com](mailto:bhudson@winningwaysinc.com)

Terry Nicoletti – VP of Marketing and Client Relations. Terry is an educator, trainer, and businessperson. She is known for her dynamic seminars and presentations on networking. 202-302-2403

[tnicoletti@winningwaysinc.com](mailto:tnicoletti@winningwaysinc.com)

### Winning Ways NewsBits

Next sales class at Tysons will start September 14th - classes are already filling! Register at [www.winningwaysinc.com](http://www.winningwaysinc.com).

Coffee Talk Executive Briefing on August 21st. Contact Joan if you are an executive that would like to "Perk up your sales."

Check out a Vienna Tysons Regional Chamber of Commerce event while Joan Fletcher is chairman of the board. See all events at [www.VTRCC.org](http://www.VTRCC.org).

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## Creating a Good Impression

Making a good first impression is a perennial problem that salespeople, in particular, have to deal with as a matter of routine. So you've made the call, you've got the introductory meeting: now how do you sell both your product and yourself, in this highly competitive market?

The impression you make on someone will consist of three stages: first, your appearance and attitude; second, your words and actions at the first meeting; and third, your words and actions in later encounters. Usually when people talk about "first impressions" they mean your appearance and attitude, and the first few words that come out of your mouth. It's true that these impressions are disproportionately strong, as they provide the other person's initial assessment of who you are, but later impressions will generally be considered more reliable. For this reason it is important to consider all three stages of impression-forming, even in your first encounter. It's no good making a favorable first impression if you are unable to follow through on claims you made to get there.

Some people respond very quickly to first impressions: they will be inclined to like, respect, and trust you very quickly if you give a favorable impression. Other people take longer, waiting to see how your later actions measure up before giving you their confidence. This is another reason it's important to keep all three stages of impression-forming in mind, even from your first encounter.

The first part of earning respect is showing respect. People will respect you most readily when they feel that you are treating them as an equal. If they feel threatened because they feel you are trying to undermine or overpower them, they will instinctively look for reasons to discredit you. On the other hand, if they feel that you respect their needs, their time, and their value, they will be much more inclined to respect you in turn.

### To show respect...

In appearance and attitude:

- Be punctual. Time is any businessperson's most valuable and most rare asset, and it is essential that you show respect for their time from the outset.

- Be polite. This extends not only to your prospect, but to anyone you might interact with on the way (a receptionist, for example); you want to show respect for the business as a whole, not just the person you're talking to today.

In your initial words and actions:

- listen attentively when your prospect is talking, and confirm your understanding of what they said.
- come prepared. Know everything you can find out about the business beforehand, by reading their website, talking to contacts, etc. This shows that you consider them important enough to have done your homework.
- end the appointment on time, as well as beginning it on time.

In later interactions:

- continue to honor appointments and commitments. Do not promise something in the first meeting if you will be unable to follow through on it.

The second part of earning respect is demonstrating confidence in yourself and in your product. Know what you have to offer them, and be proud of it. There's a crucial difference between *acting* confident and *being* confident. A confident act is usually seen through all too quickly; true confidence comes from knowledge and experience. The better you understand your product, your competition, your place in the market, and the needs of your prospect, the more true confidence you will possess.

### To show confidence...

In appearance and attitude:

- make sure you are neatly and appropriately dressed.
- smile, meet their eyes, and shake hands firmly.
- keep your posture upright and professional, but not stiff.

In your initial words and actions:

- know your subject. Be prepared to help the prospect realize what benefits your product will give them.

In later interactions:

- move the sales process forward. Go into each meeting knowing what your objective is, and work to achieve that objective. You need to respect your *own* time, as well as your prospect's.

It should be apparent by now that good first impressions are not just created in the moment of meeting. They are prepared for long in advance, as you do your research and think through how to conduct yourself in the moment of meeting. And they are reinforced long afterward, as you maintain consistency and show the prospect that their initial good impression was trustworthy.