

What Kind of Influencer Are You?

By Sandy Dumont
The Image Architect

There are three centers of influence in the US – and in many other countries as well. The first is New York, home of the powerful financial center, Wall Street, plus national and international banks. Second, there is Washington, the political center of influence and power in this country. The third great center of influence is Hollywood, with its stars influencing us far beyond the big screen. However, rock stars and some celebrity athletes and fashion models are included in this category of powerful influencers.

Hollywood and the other celebrity arenas are the only groups that can afford to look very, very sexy and outrageous. It goes with the territory. Not all forms of influence are positive, and some celebrities/stars do their fans an injustice with their outrageous behavior. Politicians and bankers who land in jail will find their careers ruined. Not so with celebrities. As long as you remain “beautiful” you are forgiven. In fact, most of us are secretly attracted to the “bad boys” and “bad girls” of Hollywood. Not so for politicians and business people. Being attractive may get you elected, but it won’t get you out of jail.

Most entrepreneurs and business people are more closely aligned with politicians. In other words, credibility and trust are of the utmost importance. However, business men and women can look as *covertly* sexy as they like; and it’s also an asset to be attractive and to have a giant dose of charm and charisma.

So what does it mean to be “covertly sexy?” It means it’s subtle and not “in your face.” For example, a man’s dark, well-tailored business suit is very sexy when compared to a pair of baggy khakis and a shapeless sack-style sport jacket in a blah color. A business suit makes a man’s shoulders look broad and his torso look slim, while the dark suit makes him look taller – and who hasn’t heard about the tall, dark and handsome man! Add a red tie and you have the icing on the cake in terms of looking dashing and attractive. Most men are not aware that a man’s tie is a phallic symbol, and that red is a sensual color. If they were, they wouldn’t be so anxious to ditch their ties!

Women have endless possibilities in terms of items that are covertly sexy. Just take lips, hair and eyes for a start. Of course, not all hair is sexy and alluring. Nevertheless, some religions require head scarves so that a long, gleaming head of lustrous hair doesn’t become so irresistible that it is *corruptible*. As for lips, there is nothing more alluring than full, pouty lips that are rich with color. Smoky eyes also draw others in irresistibly, just as Mona Lisa’s do.

A woman’s bosom is, without a doubt, sexy; but showing cleavage must be left for Hollywood starlets, who are often rated by their sexiness. However, experts in gender bias confirm that dressing suggestively in a serious business environment will get you labeled a bimbo. A woman’s hourglass shape is also innately sexy, as are the shape of her legs. A skirted suit that is tailored is both powerful and covertly sexy. And five-inch heels in gladiator styles aren’t even remotely sexy, since they cover most of the foot, making the legs appear shorter and even

stubby. Simple pumps with a little “toe cleavage” are the sexiest of all – just ask Manolo Blahnik, who made his fame with sexy shoes that had toe cleavage.

Soft lines are for women, but not for men. They look sexier with less rounded lines. The angularity of a man’s physique is naturally sexy, and this includes a lean square jawline and squared shoulders. Think of a powerful and attractive politician, and chances are you didn’t conjure up an image of a pudgy man in baggy khakis and billowy golf shirt.

In terms of power, the arena of financial services is rivaled only by influential politicians. Power and influence often go hand in hand in these two arenas. However, in terms of image, those involved in finances require the most conservative image of all. It’s no coincidence that pinstripe suits are referred to as banker’s stripes. It suggests the neat, tidy columns of figures associated with finance, but it also says I walk the straight and narrow in terms of my image. Bankers and those involved in financial services can’t afford to look sexy, since they are handling *your* money, and you wouldn’t want them to run off with it to Las Vegas! Instead of a vivid red tie, you might want to team your dark pinstripe suit with a deeper shade of red or a yellow tie.

What kind of influencer are you? You can increase both your power and your ability to influence if you know the rules of the game when it comes to image.

Sandy Dumont is an image consultant who speaks on the subject of image throughout the world. She just launched a boxed set of products to ensure that you and your employees look influential and powerful. More info at www.TheImageArchitect.com.

