



# Image Consultant Manual

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April 14, 2015 (additional requirement to get S&Gs)

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Nov 3, 2015 (Replaced Chapter 3 to "Training Requirements")

(Editors please see working .doc copy for changes highlighted in yellow.)



2011-2015 Institute of Image Training and Testing International (IITTI).

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## **Chapter 1 The Business Case**

### **A WHITE PAPER**

#### **Needs we fulfill**

Currently there are no image standards such as dress codes or policies for professional conduct in corporations. Our research shows that corporations have identified such standards as missing and seek a means of upgrading the skills of their internal employees and interviewees.

IITTI has developed standardized tests on international business standards of appearance, behaviour, business protocol and communications. IITTI recommends that these international business image and etiquette standards be adopted in the business arena worldwide.

#### **Challenges facing corporate HR**

1. A lack of a standardized measurement system for image and soft skills.

We frequently hear that soft skill trainings are treated as a discretionary activity, a "second-class citizen" in the corporate training world.

But in-depth discussions with many human resource (HR) professionals would reveal that it is not that they don't understand the importance of appropriate appearance, behavior, or communication, but the lack of a standardized measurement system that they can count on during the hiring process.

2. Justifying that image and etiquette training improves the bottom line.

The problem right now is that graduates of image and etiquette training programs have a difficult time substantiating to employers the quality of training they have received. Anyone can create a website calling themselves an image or etiquette consultant. And unless the employer already has some prior knowledge of the particular corporate trainer beforehand, the certificate employees receive from the training program probably would mean little to the employer.

Worse yet, unaware that corporate image and etiquette consulting is a profession, with professional standards, employers may find themselves hiring untrained consultants with only a retail background or unqualified consultants who tack professional appearance and etiquette onto their training curriculum. As a result, HR's find it difficult to justify the value of the training to their bosses, when they can't demonstrate the return on investment (ROI).

### 3. Unfamiliar curriculum to HR.

Few HR's of the world are familiar with the quality of what any single school can provide. Some corporate image and etiquette trainers provide top-notch services and a solid curriculum, while others provide poor-quality curriculum and few benefits.

### 4. No standardization in image curricula or image consulting trainings.

The corporate HR can't judge image and etiquette training easily because different certificates from different schools may mean different things. It would be like asking HR's to compare somebody with a kindergarten diploma vs. another person with a high school diploma. A standardized certification system would eliminate this issue of comparing apples and oranges.

### 5. It is a lose-lose-lose situation.

A. The image and etiquette consultant can't fully gain the recognition he/she deserves in the marketplace; he/she gets less business.

B. If the training received is inadequate, employees do not receive the credit they deserve for their dedication to learning the training curriculum. With inadequate skills they might not get the job or get the promotion.

C. The organization loses because they suffer from employees who have sub-standard behaviour, communication skills and appearance.

## **The IITTI solution**

### 1. IITTI's role.

Does it mean a standardized testing system would stifle the unique branding of each image consultant? Since every consultant would be providing the "same thing"?

Not at all. An analogy would be: IITTI is like a department of education. Each image training school is like Harvard University, or Princeton University; the premier brand in delivering quality services.

In other words, the IITTI standard sets the "what" to be delivered. It is up to each image consultant to design the "how" to deliver it.

## 2. Eliminating any conflict of interests.

Another perhaps more critical issue with home-spun certificate is credibility. Again, it is not so much about an image consultant not doing a good job, but providing the training and also the assessment present a case of conflict of interest. Having an unbiased, independent, international body such as IITTI doing the assessment would eliminate this conflict of interest. An image training school would be seen to be more credible.

Without the need for a school to act as the judge or the jury, the school can boast about its students passing an independent testing process. The market would see the school to be more professional.

## 3. The market can all "speak the same language".

When every party is "on the same page", it streamlines the inefficiencies. Image consultants would no longer need to educate the market about a particular certification system (which takes time and resources from all parties), graduates would know exactly what they get at the end of the training (and tell prospective employers), and HR's could embrace the standard and measure soft skills more readily.

## Chapter 2 The IITTI Exam

### What is the Exam like?

There are three (3) levels of certification:

- (1) Level 1, Basic
- (2) Level 2, Standard
- (3) Level 3, Advanced

We find it useful to describe each level with a single word or phrase; this allows you to describe to your clients very concisely what each level is about:

- (1) Level 1, Basic - "keeping up"
- (2) Level 2, Standard - "fluency"
- (3) Level 3, Advanced – "refined"

Why three levels? There is a marketing reason behind them. Think of Level 1 as the "long tail" (Chris Anderson's book *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More*). It is a vehicle that allows you to gain the attention of a wide audience. It is about exposure.

The IITTI Level 1 allows you to gain a wide audience. It is designed as a compact unit. It is not so much of a full-fledged image training but a "survival kit", a "keeping up" with the minimally acceptable for the uninitiated. Anybody who needs to deal with people in their jobs would be a good candidate. It is a "catch all".

Level 1 is designed to help you as an image consultant in attracting a wide net of people in the workforce. It allows your name and brand to be "out there".

You know how expensive marketing and advertising can be. Think of Level 1 as an advertising platform, but still with income from training a larger group albeit perhaps at a lower rate.

Level 2 is designed for a more particular group of audience. It is meant to be a full-fledged, wide-spectrum delivery for people who really want to have an advantage in their own branding. While Level 1 is there to help *prevent* people from making big mistakes that would embarrass themselves and the companies they represent, Level 2 is there to help *enhance* people in standing out in the crowd.

We ask Level 1 candidates to demonstrate *knowledge*, with only a written test. But Level 2 is where the "rubber meets the road"; not only would candidates need to sit for a written exam, but it is also where they would need to physically demonstrate their *skills* in front of an examiner. There is no faking it!

At a Level 2 practicum exam, candidates would need to demonstrate **fluency** in the execution of their skills. For example, if the examiner asks a candidate to demonstrate the American style of dining, we would expect the candidate not to hesitate in transferring the fork from the left hand to the right for eating.

At Level 2, expected skills should be second-nature. Successful candidates are those who have formed good habits by putting into practice the learned skills. You may call it a form of "muscle memory", just like top athletes can perform their skills "in their sleeps"!

Level 3 is a high-level critique. It calls for successful candidates to have not only mastered the essence of business image & etiquette, but also take it to the next level of **refinements** by reinforcing the learning outcomes through real world experience. The exam is a critiqued practicum conducted at our test centre in Vancouver, Canada. The focus is to put into practice the learned skills in a real world setting. There is no written exam for this level.

Level 3 is for managers of multinationals, professionals, professors, and politicians. That is, any vocations that demand the person to see and be seen as a public figure. A Level 3 candidate is somebody who will not only represent themselves, but their company, their profession, their university or their political parties. They are the upwardly mobile.

### **Anything fun?**

We ask Level 2 candidates to produce their own home-made video about business image and etiquette skills they have learned. And Level 3 candidates to help rate them!

The videos can be something minor, like holding open a door for people behind them at a shopping mall, or giving up their seats on a bus for the elderly. It is not meant for students to need to spend a lot of money in doing; even a cellphone video could suffice, but the content message has to be sound.

Why are we asking this? It is a way to get students to be thinking about what they would consider important. By going through the process of taking the video, they each would need to plan, design, and act; something that they will remember for a long time.

### **What does the Exam actually look like?**

The computerized, written part of the Exam is web-based.

For example, Level 1 certification requires only a computerized exam, and consists of four (4) separate sections in total of fill-in-the-blank and multiple-choice questions with their

respective weights of:

- |                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. General                 | 0%  |
| 2. Professional Appearance | 30% |
| 3. Business Etiquette      | 34% |
| 4. Dining Etiquette        | 36% |

The "General" section is in a fill-in-the-blank format. It asks survey questions about whether the exam candidate had prior training, etc. Although the General section carries zero weight, it is a compulsory section. The other three sections are in a multiple-choice format, asking technical questions in their respective subject matters.

Here is what the actual screen looks like:



## Chapter 3 Training Requirements

### LEVEL 1 BASIC EXAM

Minimum requirements for professional appearance | business etiquette | dining etiquette for professional interaction

- The image consultant must answer needs of the organisation in the session.
- The information in the guidelines is the minimum recommended and can be divided into several sessions.
- Additional information is available in several books and publications.
- Information must be delivered clearly with Powerpoint, or training methods using visuals.
- Activities, demonstrations and practice sessions are essential for assimilation of this information.
- Participants must leave with skills and knowledge to practice or reproduce learning outcomes for themselves.
- Participants are to be made aware that there may be an online test for this information.
- This information requires application and practice. It is recommended that the consultant arranges follow-up sessions if possible.

## Professional Appearance

### Characteristics of professional garment details

- Tailored
- More Formal
- More Informal

### The Differences between the three main categories of professional attire:

- Formal Business Attire -- most formal
- Semi-Formal Attire
- Informal Attire -- most casual

### NOTE:

- Online test requirements include professional attire for both Women and Men.
- WHO, WHERE AND WHEN. The consultant will research company, organisation, industry and culture before delivering seminar information for professional attire.

## Appropriate Professional Attire Guidelines

Guidelines for appropriate professional attire to be worn based on company, organisation, industry and culture.

- Garments
- Garment styles & details
- Traditional & contemporary Menswear basics: Tailored garment – classic fit, style, details
- Accessories

## Characteristics Of Appropriate Accessories For Professional Attire (Men & Women)

- Shoes: style, heel, material, colour
- Jewellery (i.e. necklaces, rings, earrings and watches): size, shapes, materials, quantity to be worn.
- Body jewellery and body art: guidelines
- Laptops & mobile phone : carry case guidelines
- Briefcases: materials and colours
- Scarves & ties: basic guidelines
- Hosiery guidelines: colour, style, weight, coordination
- Belts & Braces: colour, coordination

## Fabrics | Prints & Patterns

- Fabric materials (cotton, wool, synthetics): general guidelines
- Texture, weight, structure, finish: general guidelines
- Solids, Prints & Patterns: basic guidelines (size, shape, colour)
- Colour Recommendations to appear: authoritative, caring, approachable or energetic

## Grooming & Hygiene

- Cleanliness: Body, Hair, Teeth, Clothing & Accessories
- Condition: Clothing & Accessories
- Hair: style, colour
- Fragrance
- Grooming Basics: Hair, facial skin, facial hair, legs, feet, hands, nails
- Body Art

## Unacceptable Clothing | Fabrics | Jewellery | Accessories: For Professional Appearance (Men & Women)

- Garment & Accessory: styles, materials, colours, patterns, designs, details, size
- Combinations
- Jewellery and accessory size
- Body Art

**NOTE:** Traditional cultural attire is worn in place of Formal Business Attire for some local and regional business events, it is not appropriate for international events unless specified by the host or organiser.

**NOTE:** While the following bullets are not extensively included in the IITTI LEVEL 1 exam, we recommend the trainer take into consideration the following aspects when preparing for any training program:

- Industry styles
- Cultural differences
- Religious and ethnic requirements
- Legal dress code requirements
- Organisational, industry and safety dress code requirements
- Specific or special needs of the organization
- Clothing and appearance as a communication tool

## **Professional Behaviour | Conduct | Manners | Civility**

- Definition- the definition of the words "etiquette", "manners" and "civility"
- Networking - purpose of networking, what to talk about, behaviours to avoid
- Handshakes: Appropriate and inappropriate handshakes for business interaction
- Nametag position – correct nametag placement, unless specified by company policy
- Business Cards – how to give and receive a business card eastern & western style
- Introductions: how to introduce others, introducing oneself in a business setting
- Conversation – appropriate topics, conversation gaffes and topics to avoid

### **Workplace Behaviour Guidelines**

- Work environment respect and cleanliness
- Interaction with others
- Appropriate and inappropriate behavior
- Meeting etiquette in Canada and the US

### **Job Interviews**

- Appropriate and inappropriate attire for interviews
- Appropriate behaviour for a job interview
- Follow up

### **Telephone and Technology-Etiquette**

- How to make a business phone call
- Inappropriate behaviour on the business telephone
- Appropriate mobile phone use
- Inappropriate mobile phone behaviour and use
- How to leave a message

### **Email Etiquette**

- Guidelines for appropriate & inappropriate practices

### **Social Media Etiquette**

- Guidelines for appropriate & inappropriate practices

### **Body language**

- Acceptable personal space in North America for professional interaction
- Eye Contact – appropriate eye contact for professional interaction
- Posture, gestures and stance – general guidelines

## **Dining Etiquette during Business Interactions**

- Business Seating Arrangement – who sits where?
- Duties of Host & Guests – specific protocols for hosts and guests at home and at a restaurant
- Business conversation and timing
- Dealing with complaints
- Identify number of courses based on place setting
- Categories of Meals – a four-course meal consists of what?
- Place Settings – placement of forks and knives, plates, glasses
- Guidelines for utensils, plates and glasses: use and abuse
- General Table Manners - Appropriate and inappropriate behavior while dining
- Wine & Beverages – basic knowledge of wine and wine pairing
- Utensils – recognize different types of knives, forks, spoons
- Table Manners – what to do with your elbows, how to pass food around table
- European (Continental) vs. American Dining Style – guidelines
- Difficult Foods – appropriate way to eat them
- Tipping – how much?

## Chapter 4 How do I adopt IITTI?

### What is the first step?

The first thing to do is to contact us to get the latest copy of the *Standards and Guidelines* (S&Gs) document. This document lists all the contents that you would need to cover in your training program. (Please note that the S&Gs is a living document, and we update it annually to reflect the latest design based on field data and feedback from image trainers like you.)

The best way to contact us is to send us an email.

### What do my school need to do for my students to get the certificate?

You may want to set up a training program that would cover most of the materials in the IITTI *Standards and Guidelines* document. In addition, you may consider setting up three (3) levels in your program to reflect the three levels of IITTI exam certification.

Some details: when the time comes to the actual exam, you need to ask your students to fill in their personal data inside the IITTI website under "Student Area". We will email all notices to their email addresses based on their personal information in our website.

### Do I have to pay a licensing fee in using the *Standards and Guidelines* (S&Gs)?

No, the S&Gs are published as an open-source document by IITTI for **qualified image trainer**. That is, you are free to use this document to design and build your training program without any charge.

**You are a qualified image trainer if you satisfy the following requirements:**

#### **Requirement #1**

**(a) have relevant training experience**

**(b) have a relevant website**

or

**(a) a student in a relevant educational program such as the pre-FLC exam of AICI, or equivalent**

#### **Requirement #2**

**(a) a LinkedIn profile**

## Application for Receiving the S&Gs

(You can email your info)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Company name: \_\_\_\_\_

Years in business: \_\_\_\_\_ What is your specialty? \_\_\_\_\_

Training experience: \_\_\_\_\_

LinkedIn account link: \_\_\_\_\_

Short bio: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### How should we arrange for an Exam?

For the written test, we would arrange an impartial party to host the written exam. Frequently we work with post-secondary institutes such as a university or college as the venue. Let us know your location and we will notify you of the appropriate venue and testing date.

For the written component, the venue will have all the computers with web access and will be professionally invigilated. Written exams are one (1) hour long.

For the practicum component in Level 2, we work with hotels and restaurants as the venue. Again, please let us know your location and we will notify you of the designated venue and testing date.

Please note that the written component and the practicum component for Level 2 may be conducted on different dates at different venues.

### **How can students prove they have passed an IITTI exam on their CVs?**

You would need to instruct your students to include mentioning their IITTI user IDs on their CVs. See sample résumé at:

<http://www.IITTI.org/forStudents/sampleResume.htm>

Employers will then be able to directly verify their certification on the IITTI website.

### **How can I answer students' or employers' questions about the exam?**

There is a '*Student Guide*' and an '*HR Manual*' under the Student Area and the Employer Area respectively on our web. It is strongly recommended that you read these two documents to familiarize yourself about IITTI from their perspectives.

Contact IITTI at:

Institute of Image Training and Testing International  
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Tel: (604) 231-8197  
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