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Executive Search & Board Advisory

## YOU DON'T GET A SECOND CHANCE AT A FIRST IMPRESSION

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*"It takes 500 small details to add up to one favourable impression."* – Cary Grant

In my role as a Project Manager at Blenheim Partners, Executive Search and Board Advisory Firm, I meet people for the first time on a regular basis. Whether they are a client or candidate is not as important as the first impression that is made. This is always at the front of my mind. I am always aware of the impact I have and the impact they leave with me.

With the increased use of technology, we now have two ways to make a first impression.

The first one is usually the social media presence we create and the second is the real-life impression where we are compared to how well we represent our social media profile, which is where the first layer of trust is created.

First impressions still carry a lot of weight in job hunting—but they don't look exactly how they used to. Thanks to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Google, first impressions take shape long before a candidate walks through the door. For candidates, this means that a firm handshake and a confident smile are no longer enough. The way you present yourself online, both personally and professionally, forms a huge part of your first impression when

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approaching potential employers. These days, your online avatar creates the first impression.

The first step to make a strong impression today is to clean your social presence. Think of the tactics your potential employer might use to find information about you. It is important to remove anything that could be seen as unprofessional.

Your LinkedIn profile is an important tool for first impressions and must be up to date with current CV, company names, roles and responsibilities. The fact that only one image is permitted on your profile makes that image all the more important. A professional photo in work attire that reflects your current look is essential so you don't surprise the person you meet.

A careful consideration to your CV and cover letter will go a long way. A single resume may have done the trick once upon a time but not today. Specific, tailored content is the only way to present yourself and stand out from others. A well-worded cover letter will make an enormous difference whether targeting a boutique agency or a large organisation.

Once your online presence is shaped, the real challenge begins. We all remember the first time we went for a job interview. We meet someone new, whether individually or in a group situation and it takes only a few seconds for our brains to start making judgements, and to know we're being judged. The general trend today is people look each other up online before they meet and have a mental picture of what to expect. Therefore, it is important that your online avatar reflects who you are in real life. Creating this synergy will give you confidence when you meet face to face.

Preparation and research for your meeting is vital. You will be judged on your knowledge, curiosity, your physical appearance and body language. Your body language will say a lot about you and will communicate the real you. You may appear nervous if you cross your arms in front of your body, relaxed if you don't, and self-confident if you stand up straight. Your tone of voice, your smile, eye contact also comes into play – if you look people straight in the eye, you'll appear self-confident and honest.

With all the information available at our fingertips there is no excuse for not being prepared to make a memorable first impression that is through social media and face to face. First impressions are no longer reserved for interviews. They happen now anywhere, anytime.

It requires minimal effort to shape your social media profile to reflect who you are in real life. The combination of having a strong online presence together with the understanding of body language and good manners will be a winning combination for a memorable first impression.

## Blenheim Partners specialise in:

- Executive Search;
- Non-Executive Director Search;
- Board Strategy and Structure Consulting;
- External Succession Planning; and
- Executive Re-Engagement / Transition.

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Founded in 2012, our team have acted as specialist adviser to many of the world's leading corporations on Board and Executive performance, capability and succession planning.

Our consultants have worked with clients from all sectors and a broad range of geographies. They include over 80 of the ASX 100, 10% of the FTSE 100, Private Equity, Multinational, Private Family and Mutually Owned Companies.

Our work includes assignments that are both local and international in scope.

Our team consists of senior Search Consultants, Human Resource Directors,

Psychologists, Coaches and exceptionally experienced Researchers.

Blenheim Partners is continually investing in knowledge and understanding as exemplified by our Thought Leadership "The Challenges of Attaining Growth", Industry Papers and monthly Market Intelligence reports.

Our philosophy is to develop deep and committed relationships with a select number of clients and help them deliver a superior performance by optimising the composition of their Board and Executive team.

Our culture is built on pride, professionalism, esprit de corps and client service.

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