

# THE IMAGE GAME

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**T**HERE ARE TWO areas in the business world and the business industry that are often forgotten. Persistence is one of them and personality is the other. You don't have to know very much if you have persistence and personality. You are going to make a killing!

Let me tell you a story that happened to me while I worked at Disneyland. When you are in charge of image development, you have to check on things, look around, and so I did a lot of walking around the Park. One day I noticed that, when I walked by a large group of visiting Japanese businessmen, the noise level would go way up. I looked around to see what it was that Disney had done that caused their excitement. It took me a while to find out that it was my walking by that had caused the particular problem.

On this one day — we all have those days when we wake up in the morning and just don't feel like being an attraction — I just felt like that and didn't want to be another attraction at Disneyland. I was walking around the Pirates of the Caribbean area. Quite a few of you have been there and know the narrow street in New Orleans Square. You also know I am over six feet tall and I saw coming toward me a group of about 60 of these wonderful little Japanese businessmen. They were all about 60 to 75 years old and following their guide with her little flag. I thought to myself, "Bobbie, it's just not that kind of day. I don't feel like being an attraction today." Then I decided to heck with it. Why not give them a thrill? I knew that I was going to have to walk through the very center of this group to get down the street. They were coming toward me and we passed one another and I walked right through the middle. They were looking up and smiling and just started talking, talking, talking. They didn't think I knew what they were talking about, but I knew because I had been there before.

When I got to the other side of the group, I had this overwhelming desire



*Bobbie Gee*

to see what they were doing. I wanted to know if they had turned around. I got to the other side and I turned around and looked — I must share with you the most wonderful day of my life. Not one single man in that group of people had turned around to look at me. But they all had their cameras up on their shoulders, pointing behind them, going click, click, click, click. True story! You can't make up something like that. It was one of the greatest days I ever had there!

**I**DO A LOT of consulting with companies that have forgotten about their corporate image. How does the public view them? Disney probably had and has one of the best corporate images of any industry in the world. I learned so much about image while I was there. The bottom line of image means money! I can teach corporations and individuals that there is no doubt they will make more money.

How many of you have sat down with yourselves and held a real good corporate image meeting? After all, you are in business for yourself. Too often I

find people saying, "I work for so-and-so." If any of you feel that you work for so-and-so, you are not going to make the same amount of money as those who say, "I am in business for myself." I don't care who you work for. I don't care if the person is in a salaried position. If you realize that you are working for yourself, you are going to make a lot more money. So you must have those meetings with yourself. How are you marketing yourself? How are you promoting yourself? And what image are you projecting to the people around you?

Disney is so smart. Before anyone goes out and ever flips a hamburger or pours a Coke, he goes through 16 hours of orientation. Sixteen hours of training on how he is expected to treat people. They are told exactly what is expected of them right down to the length of their fingernails. Believe it or not, when you go in there and ask for a job, you are given a notebook and inside there are all of the rules, facts, expectations, etc. You are instructed to go home and read the notebook. Then, if you still want to work there, you are to come back and take the next step. Right then and there they weed out all the people who do not want to work there. Those who do want to meet the standards of the company come back. They are then asked, "Have you read this little book? Have you read our rules, restrictions, our appearance standards and guidelines?" If the answer is yes, they are asked to sign a piece of pink paper to the effect that they understand what the company expects of them. Six months later, when that person is out there and not looking the part or producing what the company wants in one of the listed areas, a supervisor will tell the individual that they really don't want people that work for the company to look like that. "We don't want you to have hair down to your shoulders." And this fellow says, "That's the way I want to be." "Well," the reply goes, "that is not the policy and standards of this company. Do you



remember reading that little book?" "Well, yes, I guess so," comes the answer. "You had better believe it, because we have a piece of paper that you signed acknowledging you knew the standards and policies of this organization." It is almost shape up or ship out.

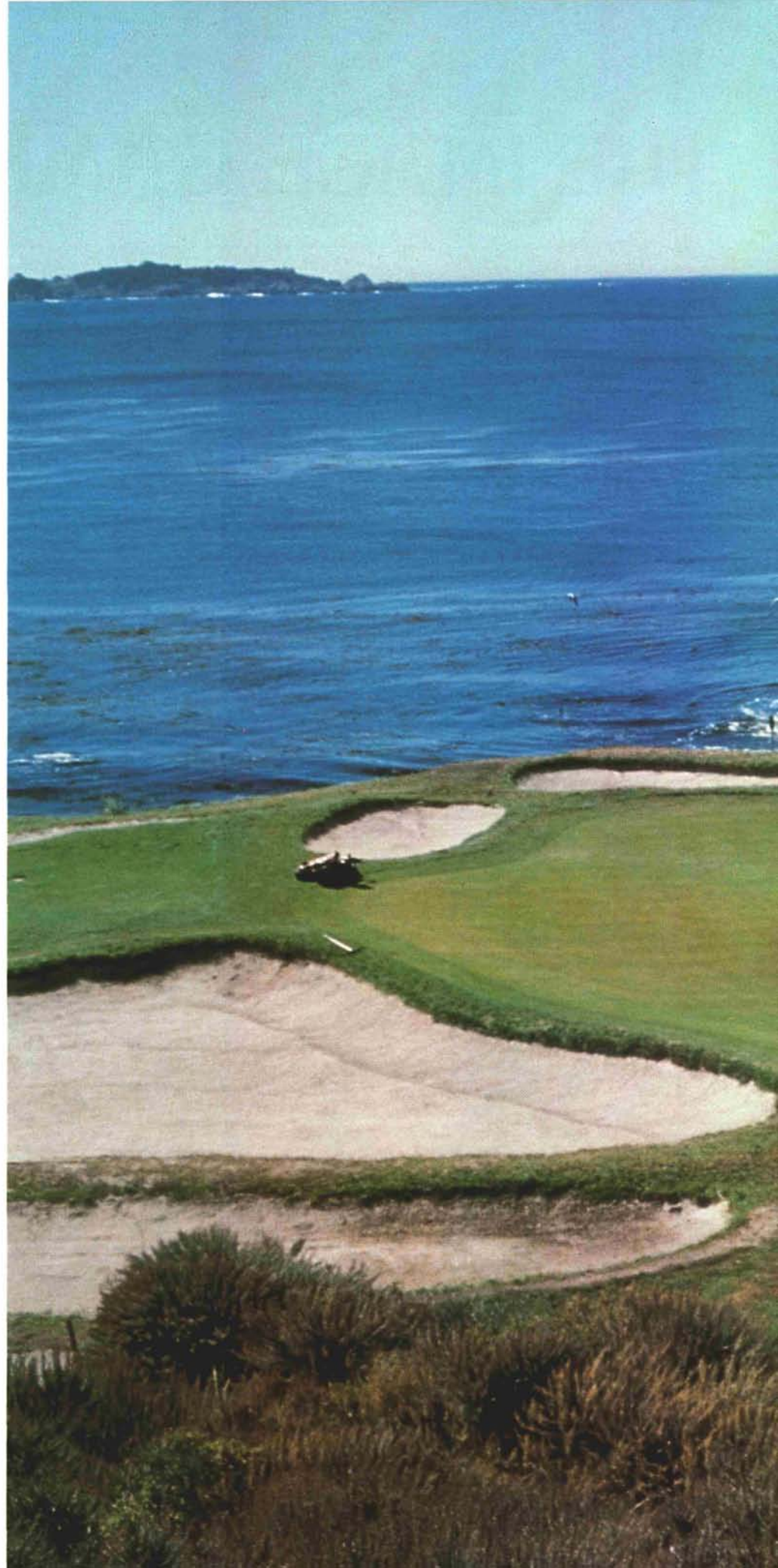
IBM has an incredible image — I have been in front of thousands of people all over America and I will ask them to name one corporation that has a great image and they invariably say IBM first. But the next interesting thing about this is, why is IBM so famous for its corporate image? Believe it or not, it is not because it makes great business machines. Surveys show it is most famous for white shirt and tie! Employees must conform. IBM's standards still stand today. What the employees put on their bodies became more famous than the business machines the company makes.

Another company with an incredible image is McDonald's hamburgers. Here is a company that understands image! The people who run McDonald's know how to project a good one. On the other hand, a company with a really bad image is the Postal Service. It has one of the worst images of any organization in the USA. You walk in there and you figure they could care less. The telephone company is another one with an image problem.

**S**O WE HAVE companies with very good images and some with very bad images. But if you want to develop a good image, you must treat yourself like a corporation. So often I find in industries everybody thinks it is the other guy's business to set the image. This company is you! Without you, you have nothing. You are the image and what you do with it makes the difference.

Selling is 15 percent knowledge and 85 percent enthusiasm. I figure I can sell just about anything if I get excited about it. I really do, and I don't need to know very many facts. So many people go to seminars, seminars, seminars. They fill their heads with facts, but they forget about the 85 percent emotional side of the brain, the personality side. Why is

*Golf has no greater image.*











*Golf course workers — trying to improve their image!*

selling 15 percent knowledge and 85 percent enthusiasm? Because the human brain is 15 percent fact and 85 percent emotion! Our emotions work on us much more effectively than facts. What is the single most important thing to every individual? *To feel important!* Every person has a tremendous need and desire to somehow feel important. You don't have to *be* important, you only have to *feel* important. Are you doing something very special to make yourself feel important? Do you have your strategy mapped out? What kind of marketing plan have you set down to do that?

The image game is a game. So many people don't understand that. If we understand the game, if we know the rules, we can play to win! Absolutely!

So play the game. Have your own company philosophy? If you are not thinking of yourself as an individual company, you have already lost thousands of dollars. What is your company image? What is your own personal company philosophy? You should be able to just spit it out. Otherwise how are you to know what your objectives are? You have got to organize that point in your mind. Most people don't get where they want to go because they don't know where they are going.

The Disney organization gets thousands of letters a year from people saying two things: "This place is so clean! How can 60,000 people tramp through the park every day and I never step on a piece of gum?" The second thing they get letters about is, "Your

people treated us so nice." It is no accident that Disney's employees treat people that way. It is because the employees sit in class for 16 hours and someone tells them, "You will treat our customers this way and you are expected to do this and expected to do that." When they have the employee's head open, they also dump in the company philosophy, which is, "We create happiness." Every single person knows what his job is: to go out there and create a little happiness for the customer. Disney was on the verge of bankruptcy when he opened Disneyland. Nobody thought it would be a success. But he never forgot the image meaning and that corporate philosophy.

But what about a personal philosophy? You should have one. You should know

what it is. I'll share mine with you: "I will lead a guilt-free life." This took me quite a few years to develop. I kept looking around at people, and it seemed there were so many unhappy, sick people. They go to motivational seminars all the time. First, the motivation lasts about 10 minutes. They get out the door, look themselves in the mirror in the car and ask, "What happened? Ten minutes ago I was going to set the world on fire and now where am I?" In order to lead a guilt-free life, you really have to make some changes. I looked at what was causing people to get old. I looked at what was causing people to end up in hospitals, and it seemed to be guilt. Doctors say they are not there because they are sick. They are there because they feel guilty. To lead a guilt-free life, I sometimes have to go to people, friends, my children, and flat out say, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to say it that way." If I don't, it will just eat me up.

**N**OW THAT WE have but briefly covered the corporate image and philosophy, I am going to move on to the visual image. By visual image, I want you to understand that elephants don't bite; mosquitoes do. I am going to tell you three personal stories about three different people who did not make the sale, and they will never know why.

First is a story about a dentist. My daughter needed a great deal of dental work done, and it meant a great amount of money to someone. This dentist was recommended, and although we had never seen him before and did not know anything about him, he had a nice office located in a fine building. That tells me something. We were ushered into a holding office and this young fellow started walking toward us. You and I know the five senses immediately take over. He was wearing yellow/green/orange plaid slacks, brown earth shoes with crepe soles and an orange shirt with a little alligator on it. He looked about 25 years old. Subconsciously, I immediately rejected him as a dentist. He started talking to us without introducing himself. He took out the x-rays, put them under the light and started using every big word he had ever learned in dental school. When it was all over, we walked right by the receptionist and right out the door. Later, I got to thinking about it. That fellow had all of his facts down;

why didn't I go to him? My subconscious mind simply could not imagine this golf caddie pulling out my daughter's teeth.

My second personal story is about a real estate person. My husband and I went to the West Indies to live for a couple of years, and when we returned, we needed a house. We walked into this beautiful real estate office and discussed our housing needs with a nice man. When he finished, he said a lady would show us some houses, and we followed her out to her car, a very dirty car. As we got closer to it I became concerned, because I don't like to ride around in dirty cars. That is not my image of myself. She opened the car door and I dusted the cigarette ashes off of my side of the seat. The car interior was littered with home brochures, listings, and papers and a sand-bottom ashtray overflowing with butts. We were with this lady all day long looking at houses because we really needed a house. She lit up a cigarette in a closed car with two non-smokers. That lady is never going to sell me anything, because I sat all day long and choked on her smoke. She had her facts down. She knew her territory and her houses, but that was not having as much of an effect on me as getting out of that car. It is the mosquitoes that get you sometimes, not the elephants.

My business partner and I went to see an attorney. We walked in and the office looked like it was a third-hand furniture store. He wore his double-knit polyester suit, ushered us into his office, crossed his legs and had a big hole in the sole of his shoe. From there on out I didn't hear another word. If this man is not making enough money to buy a new pair of shoes, obviously he is not a good attorney. See how the little things can get you and how people think?

**J**UST TO SHOW you how the human brain works, we are going to play a little game, and I am going to get you all involved. I am going to fire all of you and take away your jobs. But I am going to hire you back with a minimum salary of \$10,000 a week. Is that all right? Now your new position at \$10,000 a week is as follows:

You are a casting director in Hollywood and you are going to cast a movie for me. The first person in our movie is a conservative bank president. You tell me

what he looks like. Three-piece suit, white shirt, grey hair, dark socks, shiny shoes, clean shaven, glasses, manicured fingernails, gold watch. You did well.

Our next role is that of a shady used-car salesman. White shoes, plaid pants, pot belly, greasy hair, open-neck shirt, gold chains, sunglasses, a moustache, and smoking a cigar. You have pretty well destroyed him. Our last character will be a lady of the evening. I want you to describe for me what this lady looks like for our movie. Heavy makeup, long eyelashes, black stockings, red dress, cheap costume jewelry, big purse, slit skirt, real high heels, and chewing gum. Okay, we all have an image of this lady.

Now, you did that, I didn't. You picked out three people and described them. I have been all over the United States, and wherever I ask the same questions about the same three people, I get exactly the same answers. Our brain has been pre-programmed, and the instant we see people, we fit them into a slot. Every person fits into a pre-programmed slot in the brain. Every time you meet somebody, the instant he sets eyes on you, those five senses go to work, and they work harder than anything else we have going for us. Of the five senses, sight is the most important of all.

What do others see in you? Remember, the brain is 85 percent emotional, and we are talking about the emotional side of life, the side that is left out so often. People are 95 percent more self-conscious about their physical self than their mental self. Let me prove it.

Shopping one day in New York, my daughter and I walked into a beauty salon, and a saleslady walked up and said, "What a beautiful young girl, is there anything I can do for you?" What an opening line! She got right through to the emotions, and when you know how to do that, you really know how to affect people. Get to that emotional side of the individual.

**W**E HAVE COVERED corporate and visual images. Remember, your visual image can be changed overnight. I can put you in a new car, clothes, hairdo, etc., but I cannot change your self-image and self-esteem. That is up to you.

Why are we the way we are? Some people will never be millionaires; they are not comfortable that way, and they



never go out of their comfort zone. How did we get our self-image? When we were kids, we heard stories like Rudolph the Rednose Reindeer, The Ugly Duckling, Cinderella, etc. Analyze those stories. At 2 years of age, you heard about Cinderella being a beautiful girl who won, and three ugly sisters who lost. Rudolph is about a misformed reindeer nobody wanted to have anything to do with until he did something heroic. Cinderella is a story about the physical; Rudolph is a story about physical; The Ugly Duckling is a story about physical, and Snow White is a story about physical.

When you are 2 years old, you learn there is a difference between being beautiful and ugly. You begin thinking

about it, and by the time you get into kindergarten, you have figured it out that you had better look good in this world.

Then we go to school and start bringing papers home, and our parents go hysterical. We have another thing figured out: you had better be smart, because your parents expect you to be smart. Have good numbers and letters on that report card you bring home. We thought we had it figured out about the physical. Now somebody comes along and tells us something new. It gets us very confused.

At about 4 years of age, you want to do something really terrific, because Mom has had a bad day. You run into

your bedroom and spend the next two hours painting a picture. You are going to surprise Mom. You run into the kitchen and you say, "Mom, you know what? I just painted this nice, most fantastic picture for you!" You think that's okay. Mom takes the picture. "That's very nice." Then she says something else: "It would have been a little better if you had stayed within the lines." Mom is a teacher. Then she says, "Let me tell you something else, honey. It's not nice to go around saying nice things about yourself. Let other people do that."

So you go back in your bedroom and think, "Okay. Mom always tells the truth. I'm not supposed to go around

*Some create an image with rough . . .*





saying that I painted a fantastic, wonderful, incredible picture. I am supposed to listen to everybody else tell me that." And we start to wait, and we wait, and 25 years later, we are still waiting for everyone to say all those nice things about us. Nobody is saying them, because everybody else is waiting for everybody else to say them to them. Consequently, 70 percent of all of our conversation is to ourselves and 70 percent of that conversation is negative. Negative self-talk; 70 percent!

**I**F THERE IS ONE thing I want to teach you today, it is this: don't apologize for who or what you are! Simply be the best of you. Never apolo-

gize for being the best that you can be. Some of you are mixed up! You think it is conceit. It's not conceit. It is the nicest thing you can do for all those people who work around you, look at you and are with you all the time.

And here is something else I hope you will take home with you today. Do you know that the average parent spends 7½ minutes a week in communication with his or her children? That means some of you! Do you know that the average American couple spends 20 minutes a week in communication? That's average and that means some of you. And I am not talking about "pick up your socks and don't leave your shorts on the floor, etc." I'm talking

about communication — 7½ minutes a week; 20 minutes a week!

What are you saying to people when you get together? Not much. When you get together with your co-workers or employer 20 years from now, are they going to remember you because of something you said to them that changed their lives? Do you know a lot of people have never heard, "Gee, you're a handsome person — you're a lovely lady!" There are people who have never heard that. What if they heard it the first time from you? They would never forget you.

What are we really saying to people?

A number of years ago, a man died whom I had met just once. He died in all of your eyes a total failure. He was an

... *Some with wildflowers.*





artist; his life had disintegrated and he became an alcoholic. He died alone in a motel room. Any of you would have said the man died a failure. But that man left behind the most caring, the most loving, the most giving, one of the most respected sons I've ever met.

I went to the son one day and said, "I don't understand. You affect so many people and their lives and so many people respect you, and your father died such a failure. What was it?" And he looked at me and thought for a minute and said, "I will tell you what it was. That man, from the time I can remember until I left home at 18, walked into my bedroom every night, physically gave me a kiss on the cheek and said, "I love you, son." I thought about that and I thought about Howard Hughes. What a success he was. Yet nobody cared when Howard Hughes died. There was not one person on this earth who cared that he was gone.

What is the image that your family has of you? What are you saying to people? Are you free to express your emotions? I have watched that man's son, and I have watched him with his children, and I have watched the free flow of love between him and his children. "I love you, Daddy." "I love you, too." The hugs; the girls climbing all over him, sitting on his lap. Those girls have grown up now, but they're still sitting on his lap and they are still hanging on. And I have had the privilege of being married to that man for over 20 years, and I love his father. I never knew him. I only met him once, when I was a young bride. I hated the man because I didn't think he treated his son right. But now, the way I've seen the effect that he had on his son, I love that father.

You know there is a lot more to image than a Mercedes and a nice building. What are we saying to people?

We have been taught by a very good book that we are to love ourselves before we can love other people. But I still find so many people who are unhappy and so many people who are seminar junkies. They go from one motivational seminar to another, but they don't change. And that bothers me a great deal because they have never learned the principles of how to really love themselves first. When you get that down pat, you can really fly!



Bobbie Gee

#### About the Author:

Bobbie Gee is a speaker/consultant who has achieved national prominence as a specialist in the fields of corporate image and personal awareness.

She has consulted with such companies as Ice Capades, ITT, Bank of America, Allstate, Calgary Stampede, Century 21 and the Wrather Corporation.

For three years Bobbie was responsible for the image of Disneyland, where she held the position of appearance co-ordinator. Prior to Disneyland, she was in public relations and sales, lecturing to colleges and businesses throughout California.

She has hosted and produced two variety, talk, TV series and has made numerous television guest appearances, most recently on Hour Magazine and A.M. Los Angeles.

Bobbie is the founder and president of Orange County Speakers Bureau and is listed in *Who's Who in California* and *Who's Who in International Writers*. She is not only a successful businesswoman, but also the successful wife of a successful golf course superintendent.

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