

'Power' skills for women in business

IN THE film, "Working Girl," actress Melanie Griffith moves up the corporate ladder from secretary to high-powered executive.

By changing her image and her attitude, she cons male CEOs into thinking she's just as smart as the good old boys.

"In the beginning of the movie, she was thinking — and dressing — like a college student," explained Carole M. Lewis, a Farmington Hills resident and owner of Communication Specialists, a consulting firm in Birmingham. "She had long hair and wore a miniskirt and jewelry. The young guys (in the company) treated her like a sex object."

While her boss is recovering from a skiing accident, Griffith steps into her shoes — literally — cuts her hair and dons a business suit. Now she projects an image of power.

"The character had the brains, but she just needed the polish," Lewis said.

Lewis will be at the Renaissance Center in May to head a series of workshops designed to show women how their success in the business world depends on their image, communication ability and leadership skills.

"Today, women have to project an image that says 'I mean business,'" But Lewis isn't an advocate of John T. Molloy's dress for success formula. She prefers the "androgynous look" — business suits with a feminine flair. "Collarless jackets with silk blouses and a few, well-placed pieces of jewelry. You shouldn't have things jangling or rings on every finger."

Hemlines should cover the knee.

The most powerful color is black, then charcoal grey and taupe, Lewis said.

"You have to look the part and wear that \$500 suit even if you don't have five cents in your pocket," she added. "I read that when Onassis lost his money during the war, he worked two or three jobs, bought an expensive suit and walked into all the right places."

It's better to purchase two or three expensive suits than eight or 10 inexpensive ones, she said.

Non-verbal communication is 55 percent of the "total message you give out," Lewis said. "People assess you in the first 10-15 seconds."

In one research study, an actor dressed as a Wall Street executive approached people on Wall Street and gave them a song-and-dance about leaving his wallet and credentials at home. Almost of the people he approached gave him money, and some offered to drive him home.

On a second occasion, the same actor donned a tweed blazer and looked like a professor. When he returned to Wall Street and told his sob story, he received nasty comments — "that was a foolish thing to do" and "why don't you have your wife pick you up."

Lewis offers other pointers:

- **CARRY** either a brief case or a purse, not both.
- **BE ON** time. If you're late to an appointment, you lose power. "If you walk in late, try to appear as if you're calm and in control. Don't project a harried, frenzied image."
- **CHOOSE** the location of your



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Carole M. Lewis
communication specialist

and appropriate ways. Aggressive people express their feelings, needs and ideas at the expense of others."

In his book "When I Say No, I Feel Guilty," Manuel J. Smith offers these techniques: Repeat calmly and firmly what you need or want. If your performance is being criticized, find some truth in what the person says and continue your assertion. A sample response: "I can see how you might view it that way" or "That's possible."

Ask questions about specifics — who, what, when, where, how and why. Admit your mistakes and ask what you can do to correct the situation. Focus on behaviors, not on the person.

- **DEVELOP** good listening skills. Men only listen to the first 15 seconds of what you say and then they start figuring out how they're going to respond. Studies have shown that if two women — or two men — are talking to each other, they will interrupt one another the same number of times. If a man and woman are talking, he interrupts 93 percent of the time. That's because men have been raised to be problem-solvers and women have been raised to be caretakers.
- **CLEAN OFF** your desk. "If your desk is cluttered, people may think you're not an organized person."
- **BE ASSERTIVE**, not aggressive. "An assertive woman stands up for her rights and expresses her needs, values and concerns in direct

"Women and men listen equally as well to a person in high status, research shows."

"Women should realize that they have only 15 seconds to get their point across. And, they should make simple, declarative statements. If a man interrupts, say 'excuse me, I'd like to finish my statement' or raise your hand or give a time-out signal."

Developing good listening skills cuts down on errors.

Lewis once consulted with a manager who had trouble communicating with an employee. The manager would ask the employee to move a package of widgets from one spot to another. The worker never got it right. "The manager should ask, 'how are you going to do that?' or tell the employee to paraphrase what he just said."

- **LEARN TO** be a situational, not an authoritative, leader. When an employer first trains a new employee, he comes across as an authoritative leader. But once the employee learns the job, the employer should change his style and praise his or her progress.

For information on Lewis's spring workshops, call her at 258-4884.

office strategically. "If you're a struggling young lawyer or businesswoman and you have an office in Bloomfield Hills, Birmingham, Troy or Grosse Pointe, it carries more weight."

- **PROJECT** an image of leadership. "In our society, we like to see tall people in leadership roles. Women can wear high heels if they're

short or buy a big chair or have their desk and chair elevated."

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2 Family Dessert Theatres coming up

Charlie Brown and friends and a "Sesame Street" guest star will come to The Community Center Farmington-Farmington Hills for two family programs.

Both beginning at 7 p.m. "The Peanuts Gang Goes Broadway" will be presented Wednesday, April 19, and "It Wasn't My Idea" with Oscar Brand will be presented Wednesday, April 26.

Featuring Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, Schroeder and Patty, "The Peanuts Gang Goes Broadway" is a

musical comedy revue. The show includes stories and songs that appeal to both the young and young at heart.

The Peanuts characters face important subjects like the value of friendships and learning to deal with the trials and tribulations of everyday life.

Brought in part by The Arts Alliance Group, "The Peanuts Gang Goes Broadway" will be presented by the Ann Arbor Schools and City Recreation Departments' Goodtime Players.

BILLED AS one of entertainments most dynamic folk singers, Oscar Brand from "Sesame Street" and "Folk Song Festival" will star in "It Wasn't My Idea."

This musical extravaganza presented in cooperation with the Detroit Youththeatre of the Detroit Institute of Arts, will combine children's song classics with a look at folk music's roots.

"The Peanuts Gang Goes Broadway" and "It Wasn't My Idea" are

both Family Dessert Theaters. Ticket price is \$4 per person or \$13 per family and will include the show and a dessert reception.

Make paid reservations by calling 477-8404. The Community Center is located at 24705 Farmington Road, north of 10 Mile.

The Community Center is an independent, non-profit organization that offers programming and services for adults and youth. It is also available as a rental facility.

Part of her presentation focuses on dressing for success.

"Years ago, secretaries at General Motors were well-groomed and had perfect hair. They were the best dressed women around. But they didn't look like board presidents.

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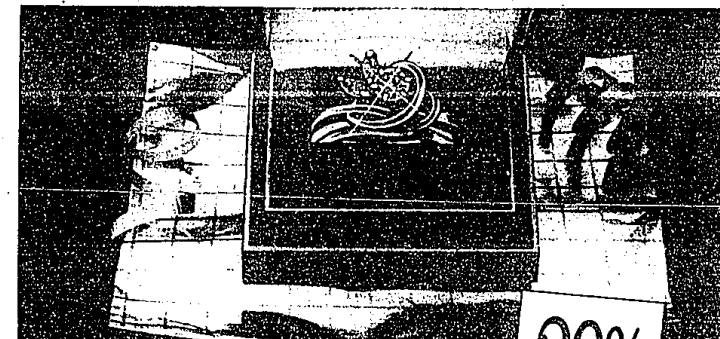
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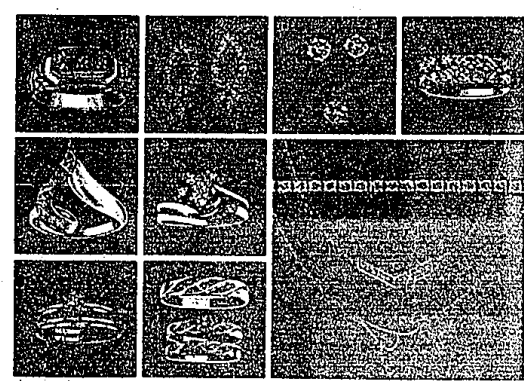


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Crooning a tune

Jack Christie, Jim Miller and Ken Reinford practice a tune they'll be crooning in Farmington Community Center's "Love Notes" show during the spring concert in 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, May 5-6 in North Farmington High School, 32900 13 Mile. Tickets are \$3.50, or \$2.50 for seniors and students, at the door.

Science exhibit shows work of the gifted

With a national concern for quality in American education and a specific concern in the area of technology and science because of the rapid advances by Asian countries, Steppingstone Elementary for the Gifted provides a glimpse into its classrooms.

An Open House-Science Exhibition of student research and projects begins at 7:30 p.m. April 14 in the school at 28600 11 Mile, in the Mercy Center Building, gate 4, entrance D.

A sampling of original proposals by the students:

- Sean DeRoche, 12, has chosen to work on behavioral conditioning to determine if hamsters are colorblind.
- Tami Morse, 11, examines various theories of brain functioning including right/left brain learning aspects. She is exploring brain components, dysfunction and reflexes.
- Elliot Bailey, 9, has become interested in fiber optics and how light is generated.
- Nate Holliday, 6, is studying the process of and displaying samples of crystal formation from several chemical combinations.
- Kathryn DeRoche, 8, is videotaping the activities of the hamster to better compare and contrast the differences between nocturnal and daytime behaviors.
- Brian Ganga, 8, and Jeff Muir, 8, have both elected to study different aspects of the shark species.

Other projects include lung function, eating disorders, endangered species, wind propulsion, production of penicillin, gas combustion engine, sound waves, explosives, aerodynamics and steam power.

ArtFair set

Art Fair '89 is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday and Monday, April 30 and May 1, in Temple Israel, 5725 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield. The show features the works of many creative artists and artisans. Admission is \$3 at the door.

A patron's champagne preview runs from 8 p.m. to midnight Saturday, April 29. Tickets are \$30 and are available by calling Temple Israel office, 641-5700.

Guest speaker for the event is Susan Stark, movie critic for The Detroit News. She will speak at 1 p.m. Monday, May 1.

Lunch will be available both days of the show.