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[ insights for the globally minded upwardly mobile professional ]

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# CONTRIBUTORS

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Janet, a certified professional Etiquette Consultant, is the Founder and Director of JSK Etiquette Consortium Limited. Janet began her etiquette training in the U.S. She holds several professional memberships including the Association of Image Consultants International (AICI) and is also Fellow of the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA).



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A soft skills consultant, image strategist and corporate speaker, Bbanga is a graduate of Connecticut University in the USA and Helsinki School of Economics in Finland. He is also a member of the Nairobi Toastmasters and one of the chapter directors of the International Networking Organisation (BNI).



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Caroline Mutoko is the Group Marketing Manager at Radio Africa and a noted radio personality in Kenya. As the courageous Program Controller at Kiss 100 she speaks with candour on societal issues always leaving no stones unturned. She holds an MBA from United States International University



## JOHN SIBI-OKUMU

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John is variously referred to as a leading actor, journalist, playwright, newscaster, columnist, linguist, producer, director, teacher and mentor. This noted thespian has appeared in Newsweek, and was recently featured in the Footprints Press publication, *Life Journeys: Scaling Heights* which features Kenyan men of distinction and achievement.

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# IMAGE BREAKERS 1

## ARE YOU A VICTIM?

By JANET ADETU

We all strive to be as normal as possible forgetting that image indeed is everything. Whether you are a professional or an entrepreneur, you will be perceived, approached and accepted based on what people see. If you consider your progress, level of success and career growth to be important then it is your duty to live up to expectation and value your image. Many people do not understand the protocol of maintaining a promising self image or the importance it has in their life.

On numerous occasions during my seminars with professionals, I have found that the motivation to create an impressive first impression is wanting. Good work ethics have become a thing of the past as the 21st century 'Generation Y' workforce is ever on the go with little time for details.

This is worrying as employers become more concerned about those they send out to act as the face of the company and represent them. There is now a growing need to invest in building an acceptable self and corporate image that gives that panache advantage. It is easy not to be aware of actions, behaviors and attitudes that truly diminish ones image until it becomes a habit that is easily noticed by others.

Below are some of the professional image breakers that I encounter on a regular basis. Are you a victim? ...This is the time to acknowledge and fix it.

### GENERAL PHYSIOLOGY

1. Sitting in an inelegant and awkward manner
2. A woman who walks like a man
3. A fierce and inappropriate body language
4. Standing in an unattractive and distracted manner

### OVERALL BODY

1. Constant bad breath
2. Offensive body odour
3. Visible sweat under the armpits
4. A man who keeps long nails
5. A woman with uncomfortably long nails
6. A woman with smelly braided hair
7. Hair that appears unkempt and unwashed
8. Maintaining an ungroomed full head of grey hair
9. Lipstick on the teeth
10. Unkempt and chipped nails
11. Untidy hair
12. Unsuitable glasses

### FRAGRANCE / APPEARANCE

1. Overbearing perfume
2. Not wearing any deodorant or perfume
3. Smelly, unwashed and dirty clothing
4. Excessive and unattractive make-up

### CLOTHING

1. Ill-fitting clothes
2. Very short skirts
3. Transparent clothing
4. Revealing underwear
5. Unflattering coloured clothing

6. Old, outdated and worn out wear
7. wrinkled and un ironed clothing
8. Dressing too old or too young
9. Sloppy business casual dressing

### FABULOUS FEET

1. Constantly worn out heels
2. Paying little attention to the shine and polish of your shoes
3. Wearing wrong tights for your skin and for the shoe
4. Giant ladders on a lady's tights
5. Wearing boots with short dresses
6. Undone shoe laces
7. Wearing uncomfortably high heels that disrupt your walk
8. Shoes that reveal your unkempt toes
9. Wearing slippers, rubber cros and sandals to work
10. You wear official shoes with jeans

### ACCESSORIES

1. Carrying an everyday cheap pen
2. Old and worn briefcase or handbag
3. Cheap watch
4. Unsuitable and excessive jewelry
5. Worn out belts
6. Wearing unmatched socks or having holes

7. Excessively big too many handbags
8. Bulky wallets
9. Wearing your pen in the breast pocket of your shirt
10. Ink stains on the shirt pocket
11. Not having a business card holder

### LANGUAGE

1. Speaking too fast, low or loud
2. Talking while eating

This extensive list gives a simple and true indication of how we live our lives daily. It is not about changing who you are but making a conscious attempt to improve your self-image, with the aim of striving for success. The list offers an insight into the many ways our image can have a negative impact.

Take it in stride and identify your image breakers then make that extra effort to adjust yourself. You can only develop professionalism by learning to make a difference each day.

Watch out for Image Breakers 2  
Office Image

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Photograph by Barbara Mimishi