**Relevance**

**YOUR PROFESSIONAL IMAGE**

A good professional image can strengthen your reputation and influence. It helps you build relationships and get results.

**Learning objectives**

By the end of the session, participants should be able to:

* Understand what affects their professional image
* Apply strategies to manage their professional image

**Before the session**

* Ask participants what they would like to gain from the session and use their comments to customize its content.
* Consider how you will facilitate the session and adjust it for your audience.
* Think of an opening activity that will grab participants’ attention and other ways to keep the session interactive.
* Prepare any materials you will need for the session.

**During the session**

* Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
* Review learning objectives.
* Highlight these key messages:
  + Every interaction, whether it’s a conversation, meeting, or email, is a chance to shape your professional image.
  + Your image is a combination of your competence, values, behavior, and appearance.
  + Part of managing your professional image is building credibility and maintaining authenticity.
  + Balancing your professional, personal, and Rotary identities online is crucial to maintaining a positive image.
* Use discussion questions to boost conversation:
  + How do you want colleagues to see you?
  + How can you be aware of what others think of you?
  + Can you describe a time when you failed to present the best image of yourself? How did you try to fix that?
  + Why are credibility and authenticity important? How can you demonstrate them?
  + What image do your social media profiles project professionally and personally?
  + Does this fit with the professional image you want to portray?
* Lead one of the activities below.
* At the end of the session:
  + Take questions from participants.
  + Review the learning objectives to make sure they’ve been achieved.
  + Ask participants to write down at least one idea they’ll use from the session.

**Activities**

1. Purpose: Managing your online presence

* Allow 20 minutes for this activity.
* Explain that groups of participants will suggest strategies for deciding what to post on their social media profiles in their professional, personal, and Rotary lives — then the groups will each pick their top five strategies.
* Divide participants into groups of four to begin discussions.
* After a set time, bring the groups together again and have them each present their five best strategies.
* Write the responses on a flip chart.
* Ask group members if they missed any top strategies and add new ones to the chart.

1. Purpose: Maintaining a professional image in difficult situations

* Allow 20 minutes for this activity.
* Ask participants to think about a difficult situation and consider how they would remain professional. Give a scenario such as:
  + Replying to an emotional email
  + Having a difficult conversation with a colleague
  + Interviewing for a new position
* Divide participants into pairs.
* Ask each pair to act out or talk about how they would respond. Have each pair discuss the traits that help maintain a professional image during difficult times.
* Ask the pairs to each report on one trait they discussed to help maintain a professional image.