

## ***Research Study establishes a relationship between image and self-esteem!***

Mt. Pleasant, Michigan – September 20, 2004 – The first ever image research study from Central Michigan University (commissioned by the Association of Image Consultants International, AICI) shows image consulting services give people more than just a “superficial boost.” The study establishes a relationship between image and self-esteem.

The purpose of the in-depth international study was to measure the effectiveness of the work of image consultants and the gain experienced by clients from having participated in consultations. Dr. JoAnn Linrud, Interim Associate Dean, College of Business Administration at CMU, designed the study, analyzed results and conducted the research. This is the first image research study of this nature ever to have been conducted.

The study, conducted from January to July, 2004 was undertaken at the request of the Association of Image Consultants, an international association with 19 chapters in 9 countries under the direction of Lynne Marks, a past president of AICI and President of the London Image Institute in Atlanta, GA.

Dr. Joyce Knudsen, Chris Ward, Evangelia Souris, Carla Mathis, Julia Rushing and Dominique Isbecque made up the team of experienced image consultant members from AICI who designed the pre and post surveys.

A total of 85 clients, representing 18 image consultants in 10 countries, participated in the study. Sixty-six percent completed both the Pre- and Post-service Surveys, while 30 completed two administrations of the Hartman index. The sample consisted of a client profile often seen by image consultants. The demographics included a high percentage of females (84 percent), aged between 25 and 54 (77 percent), married (53 percent), working full time (66 percent), and residing in the United States (57 percent).

The research study design was comprised of four components. Volunteer image consultants administered a pre and post survey to measure their clients' needs before and after the services. The surveys were sent in directly by the client and were not translated, influenced or even seen by the consultant. The survey approach allowed for collection of data relating to clients' previous learning about image and personal style, their goal achievement, the perceived value of the consultation, their satisfaction with the consultation, 42 measures of their needs in the areas of appearance, self- image, personal and professional development, and relevant demographic information.

In addition, self-esteem measures were obtained using the Hartman Self Esteem Index® in a pre- and post- service setting, administered via e-mail (or paper and pencil, if necessary). Self-esteem was defined as: the client's ability to realize and appreciate his or her own self-worth.

*Of the clients completing a pre- and a post- Hartman Self Esteem Index®, 63 percent experienced gains in their self-esteem scores, sometimes by an appreciable amount.*

In those clients whose self-esteem indexes remained the same, in all cases the completion of both initial and final Hartman Index occurred on the same day. It is possible to draw some conclusions from these level results. First it was likely that not enough learning had taken place to effect changes with these clients; not enough time had elapsed for the clients to internalize their learning, and finally perhaps the consultation itself did not address issues of self-esteem for the client.

However, the average summary score on the index, across all matched pairs, increased from 6.92 prior to consultation to 7.28 following consultation, ten percent, (on a 0-10 scale). This increase is significant, from both a practical and a statistical sense.

*Dr. Linrud reports that: "It is truthful to state that clients' self-esteem, as measured by the Hartman Self Esteem Index®, was higher following the consultations than before. It is accurate to say that these results were overwhelmingly positive."*

Other components evaluated in the Index that showed appreciable changes were self-assessment, self-improvement, self-management and internal self-esteem.

**Image Influencers:**

Clients learned about image and personal style from a variety of sources, but most often from their parents and peers. Forty percent had received no formal or informal teaching about their image or personal style. 38% indicated that their teaching was indirect, 22% had learned through makeup demonstrations, looking at magazines and shopping with friends. 18% learned through criticism. They learned about image consulting through referrals more than other method.

**Consultation Experiences:**

In every single case, clients were extremely satisfied with their consultation experience, giving extremely high ratings to their image consultants in all areas queried. In addition, their perception of the value of the sessions to them, personally, was extremely high. In 100% of consultations both their satisfaction and value ratings averaged between 4 and 5 on a 1-to-5 scale. Interestingly, the clients outside the US were even more satisfied with results than US clients.

**Needs and Goal Achievement:**

In all client consultations, there were significant differences between clients' pre-service and post-service ratings of their needs. Following the consultation sessions, clients perceived their needs to be lower and in all cases clients believed strongly that they had achieved their goals. Clients who were over 35, married, working full time and living in the US had greater goal achievement scores in the area of self-confidence, but in all cases clients perceived their goals had been met, especially related to Appearance:

Proper clothing fit,  
What type of clothing suits me?  
What colors suit me?  
How do I look up to date?  
I want a new direction for my image.

In Self-Image the greatest item of change was: "I need a new direction for my image." However all items showed significant positive changes in the post service results.

*On the Personal and professional development areas, Dr. Linrud comments:  
"The evidence shows that the image consulting sessions provided to these clients were resoundingly successful at reducing clients' perceived needs."*

**Difficulty of Change:**

Questions on personal change were included in the study because image consultants recognize that positive results often depend on the amount of physical, mental or emotional personal change the client is willing to make. Image changes can be difficult and even frightening to some people. A surprising result of this study showed that personal change was perceived to be easier after the sessions. The goal of professional development was perceived as requiring the easiest change but even in the more challenging areas of self-image, self-confidence and self-esteem, personal change was deemed easier after the consultations than before. Interestingly, females over 35 perceived that self-confidence would be easier to change than younger women or males.

The ease of change reported is significant, because part of the work of image consultants is to empower and help people change, give people the permission to change, provide support and to facilitate the process through education, tips and techniques.

### **Conclusions:**

The information gathered from this study will be valuable on many counts. It validates the work of image consultants as being important not only on a superficial level but also demonstrates a relationship between a client's image and her ability to realize and appreciate her own self-worth. Image services also have a significant impact on personal and professional development skills which relate to the areas people deem most important in life: self-confidence, career, promotion, work performance and interpersonal relationships. The bulk of our clients are female in the 18-64 age range, married or single and working full time. This is a very wide market and becoming broader as image consulting increases its reputation.

It is now possible to state that the study has established a relationship between image, or "outside" and the "inside" or human element. This will become the characteristic that most differentiates image consulting as the industry grows in the future.

The study will help the general public realize that image consultants do not have to perform extreme makeovers or work with their clients for years to impact their self-confidence. The average number of sessions in this sample was 2.18 ranging from 1 to 12 hours maximum. Image consulting makes a big difference in a small amount of time!

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