



## **Poor Hygiene Can Hurt Your Business**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Have you ever gone into an office or business and been distracted by a horrible smell? You don't want to be rude, but you just know that there is something that is disgusting in the air. You might not be able to identify the smell at first. In fact, you might not be able to name it during your time in that setting. All you know is that you never, ever want to go back there again!

Similar things can happen to your clients if you aren't diligent about the hygiene of you and your staff members.

Those who enjoy a Caesar salad one day, for example, might not have any idea about how offensive their breath can be the next day. If there is close contact between the individuals, you might find that your best clients quit dealing with your business without even knowing why this happened.

Maybe you perspire a great deal. Your morning shower and deodorant may not be sufficient for the day.

What about your feet? Stinky socks can be nasty!

Most people are very polite and might never tell you that they cannot handle the smells they endure in your office. They will just disappear!

Sometimes individuals are disgusted by seeing people who are not well-groomed. They dislike messy hair, spills on clothing or unbrushed teeth. Again, they might never tell you that they are not planning to return for your products and services, but you never see them again.

It is interesting that I have never heard anyone state that they quit going to someone because the staff and management were too clean or too well-groomed.

It is therefore better to error on the side of caution. Keep your eyes and mind open to hygiene problems that might be occurring in your office. If there is a staff member who has become lax about personal grooming, talk with that person about this. Be clear about your expectations and set a time when you can review the topic again, so they know that you care enough to follow-up.

Also, ask someone who you trust and care about to be honest with you about your own appearance and hygiene. Accept their comments and make any recommended adjustments immediately. You might not have noticed a hole in your clothing that inappropriately reveals areas of your body or presents you as a careless individual. When the person who you trust notices and tells you about it, you then have opportunity to make a change and possibly even save a client.

Personal hygiene means that you are responsible to care for yourself in a manner that is healthy and acceptable. As a business owner, however, you must also take responsibility to ensure that everyone in the office knows and meets appropriate expectations.