

Sound Professional When Talking About Image

Whether you are a company, a candidate in a job interview, or a normal employee, everyone wants to **convey** a positive and professional image, or **portray themselves as** professional.

Companies who want to sell high-quality products or services for an expensive price want to convey a **high-end** image. Companies who sell average products for an affordable price will aim to convey a **mid-range** image. Companies who sell low-quality products for a cheap price will convey a **low-end** image.

In order to create a strong brand or a strong image, it takes a lot of time and effort. A company needs to **hone** this image gradually over a period of time. The actions that a company takes, the social media presence and products that they sell all **feed into** the image that the company wants to convey. If a company fails to do this efficiently, then consumers may get the wrong impression of a company. If this is the case, the company might feel **pigeon-holed**, and they will have to make a huge effort to **shake off** their unwanted image.

Some companies, such as clothing companies or motorcycle companies might want to present a **rebellious** or **unconventional** image. Law firms or candidates in a job interview may try to present a **clean-cut** (tidy) or **squeaky-clean** (very moral) image.

The aim of any company is to be popular with consumers or clients. Every company wants to be **seen in a good light**. However, if a company receives a lot of complaints about their service, this may **tarnish** their image.



A) Match the phrases to the definitions

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

To convey	high-end	mid-range	to hone
To feed into	rebellious	squeaky-clean	to be pigeon-holed
To shake off	to be seen in a good light	to tarnish	clean-cut

1. To have a positive image among consumers: _____

"Every company wants to _____."

2. To make something perfect gradually over a period of time: _____

"We have spent 3 years trying to _____ the perfect company image."

3. Behaving in a way which does not follow rules or authority: _____
"The motorbike brand has really honed its _____ image through its advertising campaign and celebrity endorsements."
4. High-quality products for a high price: _____
"We convey our _____ image through expensive packaging on our products."
5. To have an influence on the development of something, especially in a way to strengthen an image: _____
"The media's portrayal of the protests _____ the image that the country is a dangerous place."
6. To communicate a message or an image: _____
"We need to _____ a really professional image when the visitors arrive."
7. To make something become less valuable or respected: _____
"The scandal has really _____ his image as a respected professional."
8. Intermediate in terms of quality and price: _____
"_____ brands still need to present their products professionally".
9. A person or an organisation who has never done anything wrong or immoral: _____
"After the scandal, the politician lost her _____ image."
10. To think of a person or organisation as belonging to a particular group or only having a particular skill, when in reality they do not exclusively belong to that group: _____
"The author didn't want to be _____ as a writer who could only write horror stories, so she experimented with thrillers as well."
11. To get rid of something which is unwanted: _____
"The company have spent years attempting to _____ their low-end image".
12. Tidy and respectable (often used to describe a person, but can also be used to describe a company's image): _____
*"He looked really _____ before the job interview."
 "The _____ image of our website is sure to attract new clients."*

B) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

To convey		high-end	to hone
mid-range	feed into	squeaky-clean	to be pigeon-holed
To shake off		to be seen in a bad light	to tarnish

The Luxury Hotel

As a luxury hotel, our primary aim was always to _____ a _____ image. With our luxurious facilities and fabulous views over the harbour, we very much managed to achieve that during the first few years of the hotel's opening.

However, since the Covid 19 pandemic we have really been struggling to keep the hotel running. It has meant that our standards of service slipped for a short while, and we had no choice other than to close the 3 heated swimming pools in the hotel complex due to rising energy costs. Naturally, this caused several complaints which _____ our reputation as being one of the best hotels in the coastal city. The speed at which we lost our reputation was scary. After so many years of _____ a luxury, _____, faultless reputation, it felt like it was suddenly gone within days, and as a result bookings started to dry up once again. What your hotel starts to receive bad reviews on popular booking websites, your hotel is immediately _____ generally.

We had to _____ our negative image quickly, so we decided to drastically reduce our prices in order to keep money coming in. We started to attract more _____ clients, which has been fine, but unfortunately we have now been _____ as a mid-range hotel. Once you become a mid-range hotel it is almost impossible to reclaim your high-end image. It is easy to slip down from high-end to mid-range, but climbing up in the opposite direction is almost impossible. Publicity that we have from influencers who stay at our hotel _____ this mid-range image, which means that we will no longer be able to receive the revenue from high-end customers paying high-end prices.

C) Comprehension Questions

1. In paragraph number 2, the author mentions that bookings soon started to 'dry up'. What do you think is meant by 'dry up' in this sentence?

2. What does paragraph 2 suggest was the main catalyst for the hotel losing its good reputation so quickly?

3. To what extent did the hotel decide to reduce its prices in order to attract tourists. What adverb is used to suggest this?

4. What does the article say about moving between a mid-range and a high-end brand?

5. Do you think it is possible for a brand to shake off a negative image, and how should they do it?

D) More Uses of Selected Key Words

To be seen in a good light

We can also 'portray ourselves in a good light', meaning to convey a positive image:
"I need to portray myself in a good light during the interview."

We can also 'show someone in a good light or bad light.':
"The documentary showed the company in a really bad light."
"We need to show the company in the best possible light with all of our social media posts."

E) Glossary of words for sounding professional when talking about image

to convey
to portray ourselves as
high-end / low-end
mid-range
to hone
to feed into
rebellious
unconventional

clean-cut
squeaky-clean
to be pigeon-holed
to shake off
to be seen in a good light
to portray yourself as
to tarnish