

Winning image caught my eye Advisor found a gap in the market

You may not be too clear what an image consultant can do for you...

But Janie Mackintosh is in no doubt. She describes her role as working with organisations and individuals who wish to be successful, and cheerfully adds that "Those who are already good at what they do, become brilliant!"

Banchory-based Janie launched her image consultancy after a successful career in nursing. She worked both in the UK and abroad, latterly as director of nursing. It was while in the boardroom, as the only woman in a sea of suits, that she discovered how choosing the right look helped her win their attention. She remembers: "I had to learn quickly how to gain respect and make my colleagues listen to me." She realised, too, that how she presented herself choosing different styles and colours of clothes for different occasions helped in situations as diverse as talking with patients' families, groups of nurses, or fighting her corner at director level.

Her husband's job meant a move north to Banchory, and it was when she spotted that she was acting as unpaid personal shopper and image adviser for friends, that she identified a gap in the market.

She enrolled in the School of Colour and Image, and trained in cosmetology, style, image and wardrobe management for women and men. She has since undertaken training in corporate personal branding and is now accredited by the *Federation of Image Consultants*. Janie is home-based. Private clients will occasionally attend for individual consultations there, but for larger groups, and for corporate work, she runs workshops and courses either in hotel venues or in companies' own boardrooms. Her main outlays were her studies, and an investment in products for use in her business – skincare, clothes and accessories. She says the Royal Bank was supportive throughout her start-up and since then.

"Whenever I have had a problem or needed to call them, they have always been very helpful, and I have a very good relationship with them." Initially the business was titled *Image For Impact*, appealing to mostly private clients seeking a change of image. However, as she won more and more corporate business, she decided the name didn't reflect that.

Around 18 months ago she rebranded the business as *JM Professional Image Consultants*.

Her diary was filling up nicely when a major setback struck — a broken arm put her out of action for months and hindered business growth. "Now I'm relaunching and networking big time," she says, her mission to convince businesses of the benefits of image consultancy.

She argues that if a company takes the trouble to impose corporate branding on everything from coffee cups upwards, it cannot afford to neglect its staff, too. She's pleased that businesses are now choosing her workshops as an alternative way to professional development staff loyalty.

She says that brings benefits to employers in terms of reduced sickness and staff turnover because staff have increased job satisfaction, and become energized and motivated.

"The bottom line is financial," she says. "This ultimately improves productivity and profitability.

"Like it or not, the image we portray has a major impact on the impression we make and the influence we exert."