

## How Do You Communicate Quality?

There's a story going around on the internet about an event organized by the Washington Post as an experiment about perception.

Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world, was asked to play one of the most intricate pieces ever written, on a violin worth 3.5 million dollars, in a Washington D.C. metro station the night after his sold-out concert (at an average price of \$100 per seat.) He played incognito and in 45 minutes no one recognized him and he received a mere \$32 dollars in tips and no applause.

The motto of the story is presented as we don't recognize or have time for beauty. But I think there is another lesson we might learn from this. Our quality may be represented in many aspects of our practices, but our clients may only be paying attention to where it's played out. I'm thinking of the first impressions we and our staff make on our clients.

Many people (our prospects and clients?) judge us by the way they feel when we interact with them. When they call, do we really want to hear from them? How would they know that?

If the first impression is that the person they talk to is scripted or distracted, do they feel like they're standing among strangers in a subway, ready for a ride down a long dark tube? Or among friends awaiting an uplifting experience from a maestro?

If their first impression of us is that we aren't focused and don't see them and their situation as unique and requiring careful consideration, will they see that we are nimble and astute with potential adversaries? Or will they feel the draft of an oncoming train that follows one set of rails and doesn't deviate?

Our extensive experience and sharp intellect represent quality, but they may be overlooked if we don't surround them with client centered ambience. When was the last time your office rapport was redecorated? Is it time to raise your staff training to a level commensurate with your quality?