

## **Bedford businesses redressed**

Tenants of Bedford's i-lab, the small business incubation centre, were taught how to dress for success on Thursday 21 January by popular local image consultancy Altered Image – [www.alteredimagemk.co.uk](http://www.alteredimagemk.co.uk).

Businesses at the i-lab were told by Nancy Stevens, the image consultant who runs Altered Image, that colour and style were the key to prosperity.

In a presentation aimed at making Bedford's businesses more successful, Ms Stevens said that in order to be acknowledged in these difficult times it is more important than ever to stand out from the crowd.

She said, "Psychologically, colour makes us feel better. If we feel better, we look better and then it has a knock-on response into all aspects of our lives."

Attendees were also given a live demonstration of the impact of colour and shape, and how some colours, such as black, can have a negative effect on others.

Stevens, who herself worked for one of the big six solicitors in London, said tailoring is the key. She added, "You have to spend out in order to reap the rewards."

Pristine suits for both sexes were seen as crucial, with women being strongly advised to remove the 80s' shoulder pads, while men were told to spruce up the favoured classic grey suit with a striking tie.

Bedford businessmen were also advised that 'shoes maketh the man' and that they should strongly invest in their footwear. Steven's added, "When it comes to looking smart, men's shoes really should shine."

Stevens pointed out that fitted shirts were a good business look for women, recommending ones from Gant, Ralph Lauren, Ted Baker and French Connection for being well cut and affordable.

The fairer sex were told the benefits of booking a make-up lesson, with those who wear facial products being 35 per cent more likely to be promoted than those who don't.

Stevens advised, "Long-lasting lipstick is perfect for meetings and presentations when you want the confidence of colour, knowing it's not coming off on your glass of water or will never, ever end up on your teeth!"

Men were not however overlooked when it came to personal preening with a good hair cut being seen as a vital tool in winning new business.

Tenants were told that first impressions really do count and to dress for the business they want, not the business they already have; and that they'd be surprised at the difference it makes.