

## STORY OF IMOGEN LAMPORT, AICI CIP

BY SONIA DUBEY DEWAN, AICI CIP

"MY LIFE MOTTO IS 'WILL THE SKY FALL IN HENNY PENNY?' FROM THE CHILDREN'S BOOK HENNY PENNY. WHEN I'M SCARED, WHEN I THINK I MIGHT FAIL, I ASK MYSELF THIS? **WHAT'S THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO—IF IT'S NOT DEATH, IF IT'S JUST EMBARRASSMENT OR POSSIBLE FAILURE, THEN I SHOULD GO FOR IT!**"

In this edition I bring to you a story of an image consultant who addresses all problems with a mindset to solve them and believes in sharing those solutions with the world.

Imogen Lamport, AICI CIP, has been in the image consulting industry since 2004 and has been training aspiring image consultants for over a decade. The 2019 AICI Jane Segerstrom Award winner and an innovator in the image industry, she has created an 18-directional personal colour analysis system and co-created the 16 Style Types which show how the 16 psychological types (Myers-Briggs) approach style. Moreover, she has been writing the globally award-winning style blog Inside Out Style for over a decade. Imogen has been chosen as a speaker at six AICI international conferences as well as at image conferences in Australia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. She has also been asked to present at a Federation of Image Professionals event in the UK.

Imogen is known for generously sharing her breadth of image knowledge with her readers, students, and training program attendees in a way that provides them with concrete, actionable information they can use in their own lives. Most image consultants across the world will have knowingly or unknowingly read, shared, or utilized Imogen's wealth of knowledge in their careers.

I had the opportunity to interview her recently and know more about her. Read along to know how Imogen became the name associated with innovation in the image consulting industry.

**Q. Tell us about your journey and how you got started in the image consulting industry.**

**A.** I've always had a non-manufacturing-standard body shape (which I think most of us have, too) and so found it hard to purchase clothes that fit and looked good. In my teens in the 1980s, I had

started sewing my own clothes and was interested to know why some clothes I made looked good, and other styles (which looked great on the model on the pattern packet) looked bad on me. I was always interested in knowing the why about style. Then I borrowed Colour Me Beautiful from the library and became fascinated by colour as well. I was an obvious "Winter" at that time in my life and it made sense why



my mustard yellow top made people ask me if I was feeling OK, whilst my hot pink tops always garnered compliments.

Through my 20s, I bought every image book I could find (not many at that time) and was always wanting to know the why behind colour and style. Then, in my nearly-mid 30s as a new mother when "What Not to Wear" appeared on our TVs, my interest in the whys of style was reignited. I went and saw an image consultant speak and discovered that this was a career, that you could do a training course and become an image and colour consultant. I realized that this was what I'd been searching for all my life. I knew I always wanted to run my own business, but I never knew what it was until I discovered image.

**Q. What was the biggest challenge you faced in your image consulting career and how did you overcome it?**

**A.** How to keep going when times are tough. I've weathered the Global Financial Crisis of 2009, marriage breakdown and divorce, and other personal things that come along and whack you sideways,

sending you reeling. For me, being passionate about what I do makes a huge difference. I'm naturally self-disciplined, but it's very easy to get de-motivated when times are hard and to let obstacles stop you in your tracks, rather than seeing if there is way around them, over them or through them. Being excited about what I do and knowing that it makes a big difference in my clients' lives helps me keep going. Also, having a variety of aspects to my business helps. In 2008, I started my blog, which helped me through that global financial downturn that killed off many other image consultancies as it got me out to a bigger, broader audience than I would have had access to otherwise.

In 2009, when times were slow in business and I was working on creating my Absolute Colour System of 18 colour groups, fewer clients meant more time for product development. Instead of looking at an empty diary as an opportunity to have a rest (or to close down), I used quiet times (there always are some) as times to write a new book, to develop a new program, to create something new that I can take to my clients and the world.

**Q. What made you join AICI?**

**A.** I joined AICI the minute I had finished my training back in early 2004. I knew that being part of a professional association makes you more credible in the eyes of potential clients. Many may not tell you this, but they think it!

**Q. Your accomplishments are amazing. Which achievement are you most proud of?**

**A.** I'm really proud of my blog, "Inside Out Style." It's a monster that is constantly demanding to be fed. After 11 years of blogging I've not run out of ideas (in fact I have around 50 potential post ideas written down waiting for me to flesh out at any one time). It has ignited my ability to have creative ideas and improved my writing no end! Writing has made me the image consultant I am today. It has stretched me, made me think, made me research, made me really understand colour and style. To explain complex ideas in a simple way to others takes skill.

**Q. What made you achieve your certification, CIC and then CIP?**

**A.** I have an internal need to be seen as credible, and so going for my certification was a no-brainer for me. Getting my CIP was important as I was being asked to train others (people just kept coming to me and asking if I could train them) and I knew that to get a course CEU'd, being a CIP was important, and so I did it!

**Q. How did achieving AICI certification help your career?**

**A.** From getting my CIP in 2009, I have been asked to speak at image conferences in The Philippines, Malaysia, UK, USA, and Mexico. It allows me to share my knowledge with others (which I love to do) and train aspiring image consultants globally through my online training programs.

**Q. What advice would you like to give to other image consultants in the industry?**

**A.** Keep learning. I never stop learning. I am learning



something every day, even now. I learn something from every client I see. There is always more to know! This is why I also go to AICI conferences. Even though some sessions may seem too basic, I know I'll get something out of everything I go to.

Don't stop marketing. If you want a full-time business, then you have to market your services all the time that you are not actually seeing clients (or developing a product/program). You are never going to grow a business doing two hours of marketing a week. How you do it is up to you—you may enjoy networking groups, you may love speaking in public, you may find writing is your thing (like it is mine). There is no right or wrong way. Do what is right for you.

Discover how you can understand your clients and offer them what they need in a way that works for them, which may be quite different from what you prefer. The more understood someone feels, the more they love you. We all want to be "got" by others and so having those tools and knowledge can help you in this world of artificial intelligence and programs that are now abounding. You don't want to become redundant (when a store can pick your style, why do you need someone to go shopping with you?) in the new technological world. It is the personal touch, making your clients feel understood, that will keep you ahead of the game.

### Q. What do you think is the next big thing in the industry?

A. The online world is already here, but it is working out how to harness the power of it for your business. This space is going to keep growing and changing faster and faster. Technology is changing all our lives, AI algorithms are changing the future of the online shopping space quickly. So think about how you can make what you do an amazing experience for your client. In the end, a great experience is something people will tell their networks about.

"I'M REALLY PROUD OF MY BLOG, 'INSIDE OUT STYLE.'... IT HAS STRETCHED ME, MADE ME THINK, MADE ME RESEARCH, MADE ME REALLY UNDERSTAND COLOUR AND STYLE."

*SONIA DUBEY DEWAN, AICI CIP, is an Image Consultant, an International Keynote Speaker, and an Entrepreneur. She is the first Internationally Certified Image Professional (CIP) in India chapter by Association of Image Consultants International (AICI), USA and also the President of AICI India-New Delhi Chapter.*

*Sonia is the Founder and Managing Partner of Indian School of Image Management ([www.isimmanagement.com](http://www.isimmanagement.com)), providing education and training solutions to aspiring Image Consultants.*

*Dubbed as a "Fairy Godmother of Transformation" by a leading news publication, Sonia is passionate about sharing her views on Image Management, Personal Branding, Positive Body Image, Entrepreneurship, and Women Empowerment. She regularly features in various news channels and publications in India and Mauritius. She is the Editor-in-Chief of AICI Global Magazine.*

*She quotes, "You are your most valuable asset, start investing in it today."*

# IT'S TIME TO GET AICI CERTIFIED



"Getting a certification from AICI is not about the promise of potential earnings. It is about the professionalism we uphold. Embrace certification for yourself and your profession and more importantly, for the clients we serve." —Ana Cheong Cheok Yin, AICI CIP, VP Certification, AICI Global International Board