



Move Your Career Forward By Making Positive Impressions

Creating positive first impressions is important if you want to stand out in your organization. As a career coach, my first and topmost advice to clients is that, if you want to make an impact in your organization and move up in your career, it is always beneficial to put your best foot forward the moment you first enter the company.

There is also a saying: “The way you act or behave is also the way you want yourself to be treated.” Hence, what I advise most people who want to move up in their career is to make a good impression to all the people they meet in their workplace, regardless of rank and title.

Here are some tips:

Dress to Impress

I tell my clients to look the part even before they can step up to the part. One client underestimated the power of dressing to impress. He thought that people should take him seriously just by his sheer talents alone. He saw himself stuck on his career path and despite his best efforts, some of his colleagues and most of his customers equated his sloppy sense of style to his overall work ethic. A makeover made the difference. Better-fitting suits helped prevent the perception of slouching; tailored pants made him look taller; the right accessories made him look polished and organized. He started to get noticed in the way he wanted.

It may sound prejudiced that good impressions are formed based on how people dress, but it is a fact that our consciousness always makes initial judgments based on appearance. Thus, always reflect professionalism with the way you dress.

Train Yourself to Have a Positive Outlook and Demeanor



Another overlooked stepping stone in the career path is charisma. Some professionals are fortunate to have been born with this skill; others need to develop it on their own by practicing. I spend time role playing with my clients' situations to build this habit. You, too, can practice with a career coach — or even just a friend.

Smiling can be the easiest way to communicate positivity, but many of us forget. I am a left-brained thinker and had no idea I wasn't smiling when I was giving information. I had a good reason. Smiling

isn't a left-brained activity, so when you are a deep thinker, you might forget to smile and not even know it. I had to retrain my brain to smile. As a rule, smile every 60 seconds when speaking.

Show Confidence (Or Mimic It)

I facilitate an exercise with clients called: "Mimic it till you make it." I first ask them to visualize themselves — how they'd look, act, feel and speak after attaining their target career role. Next, I ask them to mimic that behavior in their current behavior. Usually, they become



more assertive, positive and confident. With time and repetition, their future self merges with their current self, and they no longer mimic but become the person they want to be.

Showing self-assurance early in your career always creates powerful impressions. However, do not go overboard: confidence speaks quietly; arrogance talks too much. Confidence is observed through non-verbal gestures. Maintain eye contact when talking with your boss or co-workers, but don't stare as this could make things uncomfortable for the person you are talking with. Speak in a deliberate manner and shake hands firmly.

Be True to Yourself

This may seem contrary to the mimic exercise, but being true to yourself means that you build on what you already have. I have a client in the sales profession who became bogged down by different theories on sales, marketing, networking and customer care. She became so confused that she forgot her natural

skills as a sales professional. I advised her to be true to her roots; build on them instead of substituting them with something foreign to her.

People are more receptive to people who act naturally — not to those who are too controlled, which can cause people to feel like you're inauthentic. Don't pretend to be someone you are not. Instead, let your personality shine through, but use judgment. Don't go overboard to the point of showing bad manners. Your co-workers will be able to tell when you're being real, and this will make them more engaged with you.

Do More Than What Is Necessary



I also remind clients that, in the current work culture, doing your job well is the bare minimum and is not enough for a promotion. Going above and beyond the job description is how promotions come about. Do more than the usual, and your managers and colleagues will remember you in a positive way.

These are some things that you can do to make you stand out in your workplace. Whatever your purpose is for making positive first impressions, these gestures will always put you ahead of the game.