

How to manage your image on the job



When it comes to projecting a personal image, there are many things you could be doing that send the wrong signals. You want to manage your image to avoid sending mixed messages that don't truly reflect who you are to your co-workers and boss, Alison Green writes.

Your image can be affected by anything—such as whom you spend most of your time with and how you decorate your office. Watch out for these unintended—and unwanted—signals:

- **Your closest co-workers.** Spending time with co-workers who are always late, complain, get into arguments with co-workers and managers, and are content with doing the minimum work that is required will get you associated with those same qualities. Fortunately, this also goes for spending time with the office's high achievers and motivators.
- **Your hours.** How you choose to respond to the time clock sends a clear signal about how committed you are to your work. If you watch the clock, you're probably going to be viewed as uncommitted. And if you are constantly staying late, you may be viewed as having a difficult time managing your workload.
- **Your wardrobe.** Your clothing reflects how you view yourself. If you feel successful, you should be wearing clothes that show it. As the saying goes, "Dress for the job you want, not the job you have."
- **Your participation.** When you go to a meeting, how do you act? If you are totally detached—and show it by texting and checking email—you will be viewed as being unconcerned and unengaged with the company. If you are silent, you are sending the signal that you feel you do not have anything to contribute. It is important to be viewed as a participant who pays attention.
- **Your decorations.** An empty office communicates that you aren't ready to get comfortable. On the other hand, if your office is packed, it can communicate that you are disorganized.

— Adapted from "[Do You Know What Signals You're Sending At Work?](#)," Alison Green, *U.S. News & World Report's* "On Careers" blog.