

## **Is Your Personal Appearance Keeping You from Career Advancement?**

Are you career-minded or just getting by in a dead end job? If you answered career-minded, are you growing and advancing your career? Have you received periodic promotions and raises? Are you being noticed by your colleagues and given opportunities to contribute and become a member of the teams that are most important to the productiveness of your organization? If your answer is “not really” maybe it is time to seriously evaluate how you fit in with your colleagues and the boss.

Much of work is social. It is easy to forget that our relationships at work and with our customers depend on how you are perceived by them. Professional competencies are sometimes overlooked because personal appearance may not reflect the image your organization wants to project to the community and their customers. Follow these tips to help you bring your appearance in line with that of your successful coworkers.

Scan your workplace environment. Your appearance, including your wardrobe should reflect what you see in your work environment. Modesty is always a good rule. You can be creative and casual in appearance when you are off the clock. Even then evaluate how your appearance and behavior will be perceived if you run into your boss at the market or if you end up on the evening news some Saturday night.

1. Casual Fridays are fun. However casual doesn't mean faded jeans and t-shirts with slogans on them and flip flops. Khakis and polos may be a safer bet. Ladies, no matter your style selection, cover up. Work is usually not a day at the beach.
2. Hygiene police are everywhere in the workplace. Cleanliness is imperative. What do your hands say about you? Appropriate manicures and pedicures are a must for every professional. No extreme nails.
3. Look in the mirror every time you use the restroom. Keep your hair clean, appropriately styled, and out of your face. Modest makeup is a good rule of thumb and men should keep facial hair trimmed. Modestly is also important in applying fragrances. Speaking of fragrance, stale cigarette smoke can be annoying to some and create health problems for others.
4. When it comes to accessories observe the leaders in your organization and follow their lead. Jewelry can be way overdone. Noisy, gaudy and dangly may not fit with your workplace or occupational image. Themed ties can be inappropriate as well. Also consider the briefcase you carry. Is it neat and functional for your occupation and your work style? A brief case and a big purse can easily make you appear disorganized. Scale back when you can.
5. Several things we tend to forget can also affect your professional image. Keep your office clean and businesslike, as well as your vehicle. Avoid having family members in the workplace frequently. Reduce the volume on the radio or player at work and be considerate of others when using your phone or blackberry. Text messaging during a meeting can be down right rude.

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