

Bad habits or perception busters?

This morning on Yahoo.com there was an article about habits that can hold you back, which got me thinking about the things people do, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps subconsciously, that affect how they are perceived by others and that hold them back career-wise. Some of these habits are particular pet peeves of mine, which certainly have changed the way I perceive someone.

Not answering direct emails: It makes it seem as though you don't care enough about the sender to answer. If you work at an agency or for yourself, it is an absolute disaster not to answer client's emails. If you are a client, and you don't answer your email, you are making it very hard for the agency/representative to do its job on your behalf.

Not saying thank you: I have written about this before, but when someone does something for you just say thanks! A few months ago, I took out a couple hours of my day to meet with some people who were looking for advice. I did my best to listen and give suggestions. To this day, I have not received a solitary note of thanks. It makes me think that neither my time nor my input were in anyway valuable to them.

Not doing what you promised: If you say you are going to get something by the end of the day, or that you will take on a project and then not do it, you are failing to keep your promises. This makes you seem unreliable, and uncaring. Last year, while working on a group project, one of the group members offered to complete a good chunk of the project. She never did. And she didn't provide a reason, an excuse or even any further words about it. I would never work with her again. And I made sure that other people knew she dropped the ball.

Being habitually late: The article on Yahoo (link above) says this is a surefire sign of something going on...you resent having your time held hostage to someone else's schedule. To me, it shows a deep disrespect and makes me perceive you as unreliable. Enough said.

Never following up: This is a mistake that happens frequently. In the past few weeks, I have been getting estimates to get a fence built. So far, I have received four estimates. Guess how many follow up calls I have had to see if I am interested in moving ahead? None. Not one call. And you wonder why people don't get business...they don't even try to get it.

Not remembering/always forgetting: This is a catch-all, but it covers things such as always forgetting you have met someone before, forgetting to do something, not remembering names, not remembering crucial details, etc. If you have a bad memory, get an aid of some sort like a calendar or a smart phone.

The thing is some of these may just be annoyances and people will overlook them. But do some of them enough and it will affect how you are perceived. The flip side is that these are easy to fix and if you are aware that you are doing them you can change your ways. Have you recently lost a client? Did any of these play a part? Have you been overlooked for a job or a promotion? Are any of these habits yours?