Have you had the experience of realizing that the person who occupied the seat at the beach-front bar before you, imbibed in a wet swimsuit? Have you ever forgotten your lunch and happily found that a thankful department had sent over bagels for everyone that day? People we never meet impact our environment all the time. Sometimes the outcome is to our benefit, other times it just makes us uncomfortable.

The residual effects of a less–than-stellar manager who has moved on or a lackluster predecessor can pigeon hole you with a reputation you did not earn. From sponsor representatives to researchers and their administrative staff, everyone you need to work with already has a preconceived notion of what they can expect based on their experience with whatever or whoever came before you.

It is an uphill battle to change established perceptions. Use these tips to dig out of a bad reputation, take control of the message and own your expertise.

Know the Goals

Start with acquiring a firm understanding of the mission of your new workgroup. If you want to be of value to your new boss, take an interest in his or her vision and make an effort to align facets of your professional goals with that vision. This will help you integrate smoothly into your immediate workgroup by identifying for yourself what you will get out of these new professional relationships.

Take time to understand where your work-group stands within the whole institution. Are you valued? Do your co-workers feel supported and respected? Are you, as a group, innovative and accommodating? Solicit feedback from other departments that can clue you in on how much work needs to be done to change perceptions. Identifying recurring problems thatvstand wd before you.
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