

Signaling Competence, Commitment, and Compatibility

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When you're starting a new job, there are three things that you're going to want to signal to the people you meet: competence, commitment, and compatibility.

Competence (aka how well you can do your job)

To show that you can do your job fully, accurately, and promptly, you'll want to give signals that you can work independently and help others do their job too. Don't try too hard to show that you know everything. Instead, try to stay humble as you demonstrate your competence.

Commitment (aka how excited you are to do the job)

You want to show that you're fully present and eager to help your team achieve their goals. If you're enthusiastic about your job but no one else knows it, no one will understand your commitment.

Compatibility (aka how well you'll get along with people you're working with)

You want to show that you share the organization's values and culture. In order to be your full self and make others feel comfortable and eager to be around you, you'll need to make personal connections with the people you're working with.

Sadly, many workplaces aren't level playing fields. Because forms of oppression (i.e. classism, racism, sexism, heteronormativity, ableism, etc.) exist, people might assume that you will struggle with things you don't actually struggle with, and you can prove them wrong.

Note: Content is adapted from the book [The Unspoken Rules: Secrets to Starting Your Career Off Right](#) with permission from Gorick Ng.