



## Get noticed at work for the right reasons

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One of the skills that you need at work is how to promote yourself. Now some of you might be thinking that sounds like arrogance, or “blowing your own trumpet”, or being boastful. However, the truth is that once we enter the world of work, it is entirely possible to be a hard worker, achieving major accomplishments for your organisation, and no one knows anything about them. Then come performance review or bonus or promotion time you are totally overlooked. While you are busy studying it is easy. There are classes with a teacher or lecturer, who may know you very well. You write exams and complete assignments and your marks are out there for everyone to see. When you are in the workplace, unless you have a boss who makes a fuss of you and talks about your brilliance, the chances are no one is going to know what you are doing. If no one knows what you are doing, you are probably going to be overlooked for the good salary increases, for performance bonuses and promotions. Then you will be demotivated and fed up, and may decide the solution is to go to another company. Where exactly the same thing happens. In order to succeed at work, you need to self-promote. Not in a boastful or arrogant way, but you need to let people know what you are doing, otherwise how else will you be recognised for your contributions. And how else will the company know what your talents are and how to maximise your potential. You may think everyone knows what you are doing, however the reality is that most people are so involved with their own lives and their own issues, they don't take much notice of you.

So how do you promote yourself at work?

1. Firstly, it's not only your boss that needs to know what you are doing and what your potential is. Your bosses' boss and other leaders in your organisation also need to know. They are involved more often than you realise in performance review moderation and promotion decisions. So you need to network.

2. Know what your achievements and contributions are to the company. Write them down and be clear and succinct so you can talk about them off the top of your head when the chance arrives.
3. Talk up in meetings. If you are at a company conference then speak up. If you are not used to speaking up then practice something you can say and rehearse it so you are more confident at the time. If you are really battling with what to say then ask a question of someone. For instance, "Tell me more about that idea?" Asking questions will still get you noticed. You will be seen as interested and eager.
4. When you are in one-on-one situations with leaders of the company talk to them. Say hello, ask how they are (the usual pleasantries) and then make some comment about the work you are doing or ask them a question. You could say, "My name is Joe Soap and I work in the ..... department. What are some of the key things you need from our department?" Or you could ask, "What do you see our department as needing to contribute in the future?" You can start a conversation with a question. And you can always ask a senior person about the business, what they think needs to be done going forward, and what they might like to see more of from your department.
5. Take on projects that are key for the organisation and are high profile.
6. Participate in workplace events. Now being somewhat introverted I don't like lots of socials, however you don't have to stay at events the whole day or night. Show your face. Be seen, and then leave if you want to. You don't have to be good at or engage in small talk. Be genuinely friendly. Almost anyone is capable of meeting someone, introducing themselves by name and then asking how the person is.
7. Read business journals such as Harvard Business Review, or business magazines such as Fortune magazine, as well as business books. Know what is going on in the industry your company works in. You will have more meaningful things to contribute in discussions.
8. Don't gossip. Don't talk too much about your personal life and things that other people really don't want to hear about. There is such a thing as too much personal information. Talk about how you are meeting business goals.
9. When you speak, don't use lots of filler words like "um", "aah", "perhaps", "maybe", "I think" etc. They make you seem less confident. Don't give long-winded replies. You sound more confident when you keep sentences shorter and to the point. Lean forward, look interested, stand tall and keep your chin up. You want to look confident and capable.

Don't be overly critical of yourself and your attempts in the beginning. Also remember that it is okay to change your mind if you said something and now you want to change it. You, like everyone else around you, is human. As with everything in life, the more you speak up the better you get at it. So just start and don't worry too much if you don't get it perfect in the beginning. Like everything, practice makes perfect.