

Self-promotion : How to raise your personal profile

Dr. Mark Griffiths

Psychology Division, Nottingham Trent University

Have you ever wondered how high your profile is in your department? Have you ever wondered why some people are talked about all the time? Does your supervisor or line manager take you for granted? Have you ever wondered what you have to do to get noticed? Have you ever wondered what do you need to get on? Talent and luck certainly play a part, but in today's job market, self-publicity is also a tool at people's disposal. Self promotion is little more than common sense, clear thinking and application. What follows are some general hints and tips at raising your personal profile.

- **Conduct a personal PR audit** - You need self-promoting tactics to stand out from the crowd. In fact, you should learn how to conduct your own personal career-long PR campaign. You also need to be seen by the right people. Focus on your own profile and increase your visibility. The only way to do this is to be proactive. Don't wait to be asked to do things. Initiate your own activities. Taking on short-term, high profile, projects are an excellent way to get noticed. Becoming your own PR-manager will also raise your professional profile. But always remember that you have to try and achieve all these things with values, ethics and integrity. Regular "self-checks" are vital - keep your skills transferable.
- **Use your talents** - Although somewhat cliched, you have to make the best of the talents and skills that you have and use common sense. You need to be enthusiastic and interested – or at least make others think that you are. Look for opportunities and do your background research.

- **Know when and how to strike** - Very little in this life just falls into your lap. You also have to know when the time is right to strike and achieve your goals and ends. Use your age to your advantage. Youthful exuberance can sometimes win over experience (style over content) but wherever you are on the age scale, play the card that will gain you the most.
- **Impress your supervisors and managers** - Get noticed by the right people by either speaking to them direct or doing something that forces them to take notice. There is a very fine line between being cocky and assertive, and between assured self-confidence and arrogance. It's all a matter of presentation. Speaking of presentation, in some circumstances there is an argument for looking the part or doing something that is a little bit different from those around you (however, don't flout any formal or informal dress codes that your organization might have). Put your name to anything that you write or prepare. Volunteer to give presentations. Show passion and initiative, be proactive and apply yourself. Organization is essential. Evaluation and analytical skills will also be needed
- **Emphasize potential** - Potential is becoming just as vital as track record so those on the lowest rungs of the career ladder can still get up quickly. Employers want self-confidence, a strong persona and someone with a wide range of skills. Your CV must stand out. Be creative without losing credibility. Interviews are a chance to sell yourself and "package" your experiences.
- **Get networking** - You need to get out and about and let those in the know and those with power and influence know who you are. Networking is vital. There are always key individuals who you should cultivate relationships with. You should not only do this within your own organization but also look for key links within your profession and

outside of your organization. The more people that you know, the more likely you are to find help should you need it. Get out to conferences, sign up with relevant professional bodies. All these little things will help visibility and credibility. If possible, get business cards printed up.

- **Develop your communication skills** - It is your relationships with others that will finally determine your success. Effective communication is probably the single most important thing that you should think about. It's often said that you are only five people away from the person you want to meet. In today's society you need to be both a competent communicator and a team player. Do not criticize non-constructively, demand attention or shout people down as you will lose out in the long run. However, don't be overly cautious, otherwise you'll be sidelined. Once again, it's the tricky job of striking the right balance.
- **Share your achievements** - Don't be afraid to blow your own trumpet. When you have done something that you are proud about or get good feedback from something that you've done, let your supervisor or line manager know. Don't assume that someone else will tell them. Make full use of meetings and/or appraisals. Use them as another avenue to let your line managers know what you've done or achieved.
- **Be selective in what you do**- Lead by example and try to be a good role model for others. Do things that are high profile as they are a natural way of increasing visibility. Learn to recognize opportunities when you see them, knowing your strengths and working on your weaknesses.
- **Develop unique skills** - The only way to make yourself marketable is to develop a range of highly sought-after skills. At any stage of your career, take on as much responsibility as you think you can handle. Knowing about yourself (self-awareness) is a major skill in itself and needs to be exploited to its full potential. That is the only way you will

effectively manage your own career. Be professional, demonstrate your relevant skills and knowledge. Don't limit yourself to one discipline. Awareness of your skills portfolio, experience, knowledge and attributes that will help you stand out. If you are not self-aware, you will not be able to persuade people to buy into you.

- **Make a good impression** - Even when you first start your job you should know what impression that you want to make. Walking into a new working environment that is full of people that you do not know can be intimidating at the best of times but you must set off from the outset as you mean to go on. Before you even start your job, you can ask for a familiarization visit and/or tour of the premises where you can get to meet colleagues who you will be working closely with and get the general feel and layout of your new workplace. Try and get to meet new colleagues in a social situation as this is where barriers will come down and you get to know a little bit more about the people you will be spending a lot of your time with. It also pays to read up on as much about the organization as possible through their web pages, annual reports, press cuttings etc. On meeting new colleagues, greet them with a smile and a firm handshake and repeat the person's name after you're first introduced ("This is Peter", "Good to meet you Peter").
- **Continue to develop yourself** – Get yourself a role model and/or mentor. This should be someone you admire and/or aspire to be like. Try to target recognized and respected organizations with dedicated training programmes. Don't fear mistakes as these are part of a necessary process on a continuous learning curve. Continue to develop a your plan with short, medium and long-term goals.