

20/20 Career Vision: Enhancing Your Visibility Through Self-Promotion

I maintained a 97% satisfaction rating over a 24-month period as a customer care representative. I exceeded retail sales goals by an average of 17% every quarter since 2018. I created a company culture initiative that raised employee satisfaction rates by 25%. I increased shipping times by 100% by implementing a computerized inventory system. Isn't interesting how easy it is for some people to pull out their blow horn and proclaim their greatness to the world while others seem to struggle with just standing up and self-promoting their accomplishments to others. Why is that? And, how can we become better self-promoters?

Now I must admit that I am a bonafide extravert, so I don't have problem speaking up, but I also am also a former stutterer. So I also remember how challenging it was to even get up and introduce myself, much less get up and self-promote and proclaim my greatness. In the few minutes I want to share with you some tips on how to self-promote without making bragging spectacle of yourself. October is Self-Promotion Month. The idea behind celebration this month is to boost the idea that there's nothing wrong with being your own best promoter! Did you know that 80% of the world's population doesn't feel comfortable actively promoting themselves? Most of us feel like we're bragging or being too pushy when we speak or act in ways that show we think too highly of ourselves or our work. But I believe that if we do it right, self-promoting can result in big career opportunities.

In today's unstable job market, you have to be more mobile than ever before. Long-term loyalty between the company and the employee is generally considered a thing of the past. You have to be prepared, at a moment's notice, to find your next job or take advantage of your next opportunity. To make that happen, people have to know who you, what you do, and understand what value you offer in the workplace. You've probably heard it a million times before – if you want to get ahead in your career, you have to self-promote! I'll even take it a set further, I believe that it's not always the best applicant that gets the job. I believe that it's the best applicant, that articulates he or she is the best applicant that gets the job!

And your ability to articulate that you are the best applicant for the job is called Self-Promoting. And in most cases that Self-Promoting starts way before the actual interview. Through the Art of Self-Promotion, you establish a reputation in your field. You become memorable, which means that people think of you when opportunities become available that fit your

skill set. That's why they say it's not only about "who you know" but mostly about "who knows you!" When people know your skill set and value, you are more able to move around with ease because of your marketability, giving you peace of mind even in an uncertain job market. For that reason, Self-Promoting is an invaluable Career Tool! And if done the right way, it can feel natural, authentic and comfortable for everyone involved. You will come off as helpful, valuable, and enthusiastic about what you do; and you'll build a positive strong reputation in your department, company, and industry. In today's podcast, I want to share with you a few strategies on how to make sure your hard work doesn't go unnoticed.

Change the way you are thinking about Self-Promotion: If the idea of self-promotion makes you cringe, then maybe you need to change your perception of self-promotion. You probably think it means bragging and pumping yourself up above others, but it doesn't have to be like that. In fact, it shouldn't be like that. One of my favorite motivation speakers, the late Dr. Wayne Dyer use to say – "When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at begin to change!" It's helpful to think of self-promotion not as talking about yourself, but as talking about your work. And if you're enthusiastic about your work, self-promotion become that much easier. You need to change the way you are looking at self-promotion. Focus on what you can give, rather than what you can get when you self-promote. The world needs that special gift that only you have. And if you hold back from self-promotion, you are stealing from those who need you most. We need to really start thinking about self-promoting as a service or public service. It is our personal contribution to a company, an institution or society. I mean you never know if someone needs to hear about what you do. If not for themselves, maybe for a friend or a colleague. I'm sure you had this happen before. You go out and meet someone and they tell you that they are a Web Designer and your Say, OMG! You are exactly who I have been looking for! Thank goodness you said something! When you learn to change the way you think about self-promoting, you'll learn that it's not as hard as you think.

Next, you have to accept the fact that self-promoting is an essential part of your Career Development! You have to accept the fact that self-promotion is an essential part of your career development. If you don't engage in self-promotion, then how are you ever going to get promoted? Think about that! You need to think of yourself as a product. You may be

absolutely amazing, but if you don't advertise that to the right people, no one will know. Just like the skills you learned in school that trained you to be good at your job, the skill of self-promotion is essential for being successful in your career.

Take Every Opportunity To Enhance Your Visibility: Meredith Fineman, author of the book "Brag Better" calls people who have done the work, but don't know how to talk about it, the Qualified Quiet! You deserve the credit and the growth opportunity for all the good work that you do. How many times has your boss asked you, "What's up?" Chances are, you said "Not Much! Every time. Usually people are unprepared to answer that question, and they blow an excellent opportunity to self-promote in front of their boss. Author Meredith Fineman recommends that you take the opportunity to say that work is great and to talk about the progress of your latest project or a recent accomplishment. In addition, Fineman says if there's only one time you feel comfortable giving yourself a pat on the back, it should be during your performance review. Show up with a list of your accomplishments, projects completed, challenges overcome and positive feedback from your peers. According to Fineman, if you miss this chance to promote yourself, you probably don't deserve a raise or a promotion. So take advantage of opportunities to self-promote every chance that you get.

Build up your personal and professional network: You probably heard the expression, if you are not NETWORKING, you are not working. Or, that your NETWORK is your NETWORTH! In the professional world, WHO you know is often more important than WHAT you know. But more important than that is WHO knows YOU! Building your network and making connections is a great way to self-promote, and if you do that you'll probably have others promoting you as well. Developing a network of relationships will bring long-term career value both for you and your network.

Be An Industry Expert: To expand your visibility, you should also self-promote outside your company or organization. For starters, be aware of how you are perceived via your social media presence. You want to be strategic in your participation on LinkedIn, Twitter, and even Facebook and anywhere you are connected with professional contacts. The strategy is to use these platforms to communicate about what you want to be known for.

Are there people who you consistently see on your LinkedIn or Twitter feeds who are providing valuable tips and information? Don't just read their posts, comment on their posts, and start a dialogue. Then, create your own posts and add your name to the field. If you consistently pop up on other people's screens as a resource or information in your field, you'll quickly brand yourself as an industry expert. How cool is that? This not only looks compelling for prospective employers and recruiters who may be researching you online; it also expands your reach, allowing you to create a global network of contacts and potential job leads. This is a great way to create a strong online presence that can do some of the bragging for you. Beyond the virtual world, you can promote yourself as an expert by writing and submitting articles or speaking about your area of expertise. Industry publications and websites are often in need of contributors.

Make Good Feedback Stick: If you get an email from a co-work or customer complimenting you on a job well done, forward it to your boss. You might want to add a comment to the email that your boss feels compelled to respond to such as – “Another satisfied customer, don't you agree?” When your boss or supervisor is forced to respond to your message, it has a good chance of sticking.

Promote Others and Yourself at the Same Time: Giving praise is often a lot easier than pushing for it. And in showing your appreciation for others, you can self-promote as well. Here's how it works: During a project or after it wraps up, you can share what your teammates did well. Simply highlight how each of your team members contributed to the project's success as well as your own impact on the project. It makes it easier for you to open up about what a great job you did when you're not just talking about yourself the whole time. The law of reciprocity says, if I scratch your back, then you scratch mine. Now, the law of reciprocity is not an exact science, but 7 out of 10 people, if you compliment them, they will be sure to return the favor.

Now let's recap. Self-Promotion is the subtle art of marketing yourself. The strategies to help you become a better self-promoter are: Change the way you are thinking about Self-Promotion. You need to start thinking of Self-Promotion as a public Service. The world needs that special gift that only you can give.

- 1) Accept the fact that Self-Promotion is an essential part of your career development. If you don't engage in self-promotion, how are you ever going to get promoted?
- 2) Take every opportunity to enhance your visibility. And you want to especially take advantage to self-promote each year during your performance review.
- 3) Build up your network. Making connections with others is a great way to self-promote because what's even more important than Who Knows You is that they also know What You Do!
- 4) Be an Industry Expert. You want to use your social media presence to communicate what you want to be known for in your industry.
- 5) Make good feedback stick. Remember to forward emails and letters complimenting you for your good work to your supervisors.
- 6) Promote others and yourself at the same time. This means taking advantage of the law of reciprocity that says, if I scratch your back, you'll scratch mine.

In Conclusion, most of us are taught, don't brag and don't show off. I think it's time that we untangle these feelings of Shame and self-consciousness from sharing our gifts and offering our service to the world! The world needs that special gift that only you have! Now... If you still don't feel comfortable tooting your own horn, that's your choice. But realize that if you don't talk up your accomplishments, you not only decrease your chances of getting promoted, but also decrease your chances of hanging onto your job. The fact of the matter is... if you don't brag about yourself... nobody else will! If you need help developing your self-promotion skills, schedule an appointment with one of our Career Specialist today. You can schedule an appointment at careers.waketech.edu. That is careers.waketech.edu. This is career coach Larry Tucker hoping you have a wonderful day, and an excellent Self-Promotion Month.