

# Amplify Your Accomplishments

There are plenty of ways to make your value visible without triggering the backlash some women and members of other underrepresented groups face when overtly self-promoting. How? Don't cave to cultural expectations. Weaponize them by taking full advantage of the stereotype of women as selfless and communal workers. Call it "stealth-promotion," not "self-promotion."

## 9 Strategies for Stealth Promotion

Here are 9 strategies you can use to ensure that your voice is heard, your value is visible, and your accomplishments get acknowledged.

Don't even think of attempting to use them all! Choose the ones that are authentic to your style and fit well within your organization's culture. Some will even combat bias in the long term by making the idea of women promoting their value so common it's unremarkable, and they'll set a new baseline of expected behavior.

### 1. Upgrade Your Elevator Speech

Your elevator speech is your verbal business card—a way to reinforce your personal brand every time you introduce (or reintroduce) yourself to others. To create a memorable elevator speech, include these three elements:

- Your name, job title, and personal brand statement.
- A crisp overview of three responsibilities that support your career aspirations. For example, say, "I am responsible for a, b, and c," where a, b, and c are straightforward, concise bullet points.
- Finish with a statement like, "Come directly to me whenever you need x, y, and z."

To shift perception of yourself from doer to leader, use strong, active leadership verbs. Don't say you "work on" something. Say you "lead," "direct," "oversee," "run," "orchestrate," "supervise," "head up," or are "in charge."

### 2. Give Progress Updates

Anytime you attack a new project, role, or assignment that showcases your leadership strengths and aligns with your aspirations, ask your management, "Mind if I keep you updated?" and "How frequently shall I check in?" so it's accepted and expected that you share your progress.

That way, it's not self-promoting, it's updating.

### **3. Become a Hub for Knowledge**

When we brainstorm ways to promote accomplishments in my workshops, techniques that involve sharing knowledge are by far the most popular. For example, you could create a presentation to share best practices, contribute an article to your company's newsletter or an industry publication, or ask for a spot on a meeting agenda to share knowledge or lessons learned. The value to others is indisputable. People love to learn from you.

### **4. Tell Your Stories**

Take one of your proudest career wins or hard-won results and craft a memorable anecdote using the SPAR model, which describes the following:

S: Situation

P: Problem

A: Action

R: Result

### **5. Speak the F Word**

So you bombed the big presentation, missed a product rollout deadline, or had your new team implode. What now?

Don't be afraid to speak the F word: failure. Don't hide your face-plants, flops, and fails. Think of them as "flopportunities" and embrace them as part of your leadership journey, by telling an inspiring story about what went wrong and how you turned things around.

The SPAR model of storytelling, (situation, problem, action, result) works well here too. This technique works well for your accomplishments too, but trust me: your mess-ups will be much more memorable. When people experience a similar situation, they'll be more likely to remember you, the expert who overcame it.

### **6. Galvanize a Community**

There's a lot you can accomplish by yourself, but if you want to do bigger things, it's going to take a community! Get to know others who share your interests, solve similar problems, or care about a cause or mission aligned with your personal brand. Join a group, start a group, volunteer on the leadership team of a professional association, or bring experts in to speak to your team.

When you have a supportive community, you can test opinions, develop a point of view, amplify your voice, and become a highly visible leader.

## **7. Go After Awards and Recognition**

External recognition confers clout. It's one thing to be a researcher, but another thing entirely to be an award-winning researcher. Add one or two more awards and you have a multi-award-winning researcher. This is known as "third-party validation," which is a fancy way of saying that when someone else toots your horn it's seen as more credible than when you toot it yourself.

If you have a diploma, certificate, trophy, or photograph that represents an achievement, put it on display! If you're starting out, look for ways to earn internal recognition, such as spot awards, and company honors. As your body of work expands, go after industry-level recognition. Posts about such achievements can elicit high engagement on LinkedIn as people chime in to congratulate you. And if it feels too cringe-worthy to self-nominate, leverage the next strategy...

## **8. Make Use of Posse Power**

Don't underestimate the power of banding together with peers, especially other women, to smash social norms around recognition. Form a support squad to back each other's ideas in meetings, call attention to each other's accomplishments, and nominate each other for awards, and highly visible roles. This stealthy style of clapping back at bias works like gangbusters.

## **9. The Cooperative Brag**

Talk up what your team is doing. When you make heroes out of others and use a "cooperative brag" for accomplishments that are tied with your own, you'll not only raise your profile, but also boost the motivation and engagement of everyone around you. And more praise leads to higher team performance.

When you stand up and acknowledge others, everyone wins.

## **Amplify Your Accomplishments**

- Start keeping a running list of high-value accomplishments that reflect your leadership strengths.
- Select one or more key accomplishments to highlight this week.
- Choose a way to promote each accomplishment. Try to select activities you enjoy.
- Confirm that your strategy works in your organization's culture.

## **Bonus: Build a Hero-Making Machine**

When a team's culture celebrates achievement, everyone gets to worry less about promoting their own achievements. See if your team can embrace more activities that recognize accomplishments and excellence, so it becomes embedded in the group's culture.

# 33 Ways to Amplify Accomplishments

1. Forward a message where someone thanks you for something you've done well to your boss and your boss's boss. Add the three simple letters FYI before hitting send.
2. Take what you worked on in one area and reproduce those best practices in another.
3. Frame and display a diploma, certificate, or photograph that represents an achievement.
4. Feature your leadership strengths or personal brand statement in your employee profile, email signature, business cards, presentations, bio, and social media profiles.
5. Upgrade your elevator speech to reflect your leadership strengths, personal brand, and untapped potential.
6. Update a key leader or stakeholder on your progress toward a goal.
7. Start sending regular status reports to a distribution list of people who would appreciate being kept up to date.
8. Create a presentation on best practices to share with other teams.
9. Contribute an article to your organization's newsletter or an industry publication.
10. Invite a leader to a team meeting to hear what you and your colleagues are working on.
11. Ask a well-thought-out question at a meeting that shows what you know.
12. Ask for a spot on a meeting agenda to share updates, knowledge, or lessons learned.
13. Write a social media humblebrag.
14. Write a blog post. If you don't have a blog, post it on your LinkedIn profile.
15. Give a webinar or lunchtime talk, and include examples of your work.
16. Make an instructional video.
17. Be a podcast guest.

18. Give a conference presentation or join a panel.
19. Remind people you're always happy to answer questions about your area of expertise.
20. Craft a story to tell about a failure you bounced back from or an important problem you solved.
21. Start a group whose mission is linked to your personal brand or leadership strengths.
22. Volunteer on the leadership team of a professional association.
23. Self-nominate for awards and recognition.
24. Ask a colleague, manager, or mentor to nominate you for an award. (Offer to fill out the paperwork.)
25. Team up with a group of colleagues and nominate each other for awards and recognition.
26. Back your colleagues' ideas in meetings, and call attention to each other's accomplishments.
27. Create "forwardable praise," a glowing email about team accomplishments to forward up the management chain.
28. Start meetings by asking each individual to share a recent accomplishment or best practice.
29. Set up a Slack channel for recognizing team members' achievements.
30. Create a story to tell about a problem the team conquered.
31. Frame and hang documents or photographs that represent a group achievement.
32. Write five recommendations for others on LinkedIn. (I can pretty much guarantee someone will write one for you in return.)
33. Put together a presentation on a team win or best practices. Bring others along to copresent it to management, in a learning session, or to other groups.

## Notes

