

Moving Up the Ladder: 10 Strategies for Getting Yourself Promoted

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Some career experts say that the day you start a new job you should begin planning for your next job. And you know what? You should! Just make sure that you stay focused enough on the job you were hired for that you succeed and excel in that position before looking for the next one.

Promotions are not a given. It used to be that workers progressed along specific career paths during their careers, but the impact of technology, globalization, and flatter organizational structures, has changed that paradigm. Today, employees have to create and manage their own career paths -- through one or multiple organizations. And remember that a promotion is not always an upward path. Sometimes -- especially in today's business environment -- you may need to make a lateral move to position yourself for a later upward move.

How do you develop your promotion plan? Incorporate these 10 strategies into your plan.

1. Develop Mentoring Relationships

One recent study found that in four out of five promotions, those promoted had a mentoring relationship with someone higher in the company who helped spread the good word about them. Some companies have formal mentoring programs, but even if your company does not, there are still ways you can build relationships with people in higher positions in the company. Mentors can also be great sources for information and career guidance.

2. Quantify Results

While promotions are not necessarily based on your past performance, you can certainly make a much better case for a promotion by showing detailed information about your past successes. Those who get results get ahead.

Keep a record of everything you do that enhances the company's bottom line, that puts the company or your department in a good light, that is creative and innovative, and that shows your loyalty and commitment to the organization.

3. Practice Self-Promotion

We're taught by our families that modesty is a virtue, but just as with job-hunting, if no one knows how great you are, you simply won't get ahead. Be a known quantity. If you have had major accomplishments or created new or award-winning programs, make sure people know about them -- especially the people doing the promoting.

Sell yourself -- and let it be known that you are seeking a promotion. One professional we know sends out a monthly email to his boss and his boss's boss to keep them updated on his progress on various projects -- and to share any accomplishments and accolades that occurred in the previous month.

4. Establish a Bond with Your Boss

It might help to think of your boss as one of those border guards between countries. S/he can either be raising the gate and waving you onward and upward to your next position within the company, or s/he can be keeping the gate down and blocking you from any movement within the company. Use all opportunities to make your boss a key supporter of your promotion.

Use professional settings to seek counsel and stress your interest in staying with the company. Use performance appraisals not just to go over your accomplishments, but to talk with your boss about potential roadblocks to a promotion -- and how to overcome those roadblocks.

Some experts also suggest building rapport with your boss by learning more about his or her outside interests and hobbies -- and then chatting about them during conferences, parties, or other informal activities.

5. Acquire New Knowledge and Skills

It goes without saying that one of the best ways to succeed in getting a promotion is to expand your knowledge and skills sets in areas that are critical to the organization. As technology and other environmental forces change rapidly, you need an ever-increasing skill set not only to perform your job, but to stay marketable.

Experts also suggest that employees who want to get ahead should not only keep current with industry news and events, but to also pay attention to trends and events outside their specialty.

6. Build Your Network

The more people who know you, know your strengths and abilities, know your value to the organization, and know (at least some of) your ambitions, the more likely your name will be discussed when opportunities arise.

An added benefit of networking is that you will learn much more about the company if you network with people in other areas of the organization. Learn more about networking [here](#).

7. Ask for More Responsibilities

Volunteering to help out other departments or teams -- or simply asking for more responsibilities -- increases your value within the organization. Asking for more work shows your interest and desire to help your department and company to succeed -- as well as putting a spotlight on your value to the organization.

8. Act Professionally at All Times

Earn a reputation for being dependable, professional, and cooperative. Act and look the part.

- Dress professionally and neatly -- even on business casual days.
- Ask questions when you aren't sure how to do something.
- Dare to be different -- make yourself stand out from the pack.
- Keep a positive outlook on things, even when in tough situations.
- Don't whine or complain - or blame others -- when things don't go your way.
- Make a name for yourself in your industry through conferences, articles, speeches.
- Don't be a clock-watcher.

Finally, be a problem-solver. Don't go to your boss with problems. If a difficult situation arises, be sure to come up with at least one solution before seeking your boss's blessing for dealing with the situation. Problem-solvers get promoted. Complainers who expect the boss to solve all their problems don't.

9. Be a Team Player

Because so much of work is now accomplished through teams -- departmental or cross-functional -- it becomes even more important to share successes with your team and to avoid pointing your finger when there are failures.

And by being a team player, you only build your reputation and increase your value to the organization.

10. Create Your Own Opportunities

After studying the needs and challenges of the organizations, if you see an area that has been neglected -- and you have key skills in that area - write a proposal for a new position.

And even if the company does not go for the new position, you have again shown your initiative, creativity, and value to the firm -- and these things can only help you the next time you request a promotion.

Surefire Ways Not to Get Promoted

1. Don't plan your day. Go to work each day without a plan in mind.
2. Do the minimum. Have the attitude of "they don't pay me for that."
3. Rely on your current base of knowledge. No need to learn new skills.
4. Voice your complaints. Be vocal about what you don't like at work.
5. Don't share the credit. Put your name alone at the top of successful projects.

From Dr. Donald E. Wetmore's [The Productivity Institute](#)

Questions about some of the terminology used in this article? Get more information (definitions and links) on key college, career, and job-search terms by going to our [Job-Seeker's Glossary of Job-Hunting Terms](#).

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