The Politics of Promotion

How High Achieving Women Get Ahead and Stay Ahead

BONNIE MARCUS

@selfpromote
#PoliticsOfPromotion
The Importance of Political Will

Political skill is very important but it’s only one part of the equation. Organizations are political arenas and to be effective in such arenas, one must have BOTH the political will and political skill.

Mintzberg
Starting point:
Embrace the politics.
Understand its importance.
Your Political Toolkit

- Mirror
- Magnifying Glass
- Pass Go and Collect $200 Card
- Get Out of Jail Free Card
- GPS
Self Promotion

The tool for access to informal networks and information
The Importance of Self-Promotion

“When women were proactive in making their achievements known, they advanced further, increased their compensation growth, and were more satisfied with their careers.”

Promotion is a Political Skill

Adjust one’s behavior to the environment and situation.

Know yourself and your value proposition

Know your audience: what interests them, what motivates them.

Communicate your value: who, when, where, how.
(Let others know what you can do for them.)

@selfpromote #PoliticsOfPromotion
Self-Promotion is a leadership skill

"Self promotion is a skill that can and must be learned. Self promotion is critical for exposure and recognition for you and your team. It is a much needed leadership skill that is easy to learn and attain."

I Wish I’d Known That Earlier in My Career: The Power of Positive Workplace Politics, Jane Horan
Observation
Understand the Workplace Dynamics
3 Things To Look For:

1. The Rules: *the written and unwritten rules.*

2. The Power: *who has power and influence?*

3. The Culture: *what type of culture?*
The Rules
What are the rules?

• Meritocracy
  – Who gets promoted and why?
  – What does it take to get promoted?
  – What’s your experience about what it takes for a woman to get ahead?
What are the rules?

• Equal Opportunity
  – Who are the senior leaders?
  – Is there equal representation male/female?
  – Do men get promoted faster?
  – Are women stuck in support roles?
  – Does the company invest in women’s leadership?
The Power
Who has power?

• Who has power and influence behind the org chart?
• How are decisions made?
• Who is in “favor”?
• Who initiates change?
  – Top down?
  – Bottom up?
How are decisions made?

Reality of the Workplace
Decision Makers

Influence

Influence

Influence

Influence

Decision Maker(s)

Influence

Influence

Influence
The Culture
What is the culture?

• Consensus driven?
• Conservative? Innovative? Toxic?
• How does the culture adapt to change?
• Does the company pay lip service to diversity?
• What type of behavior is rewarded?
• What type of behavior is *not* rewarded?
What have you learned about the reality of your workplace?
Strategic Networking

Collect $200.00 Salary As You Pass
A strategic network is a powerful collection of people who are willing and able to speak for you.
Benefits of a Strategic Network

• Results in increased Income.

• Helps promote you/refers you to new opportunities.

• Offers critical information about the workplace, people, politics.
The Importance of Networking

“Upwardly Mobile, Inc., with the support of Pepperdine University’s Graziadio School of Business Management, surveyed 600 high earning “elite” professionals in 2008 about how they use networking and found that “networking was a key driver behind higher salaries and career advancement.”

Upwardly Mobile, Inc., with the support of Pepperdine University’s Graziadio School of Business Management
What holds us back?

• We limit our network to people we know and like.
• We don’t network strategically to support our career advancement.
• We don’t network proactively.
• We don’t delegate and set aside dedicated time to network.
• We don’t leverage relationships.
How to Create a Strategic Network

Starting point: What is your career goal?

- Understand your own influence and establish your competence and credibility.
- Establish mutually beneficial relationships.
- Build allies and bridges across the organization.
- Identify key stakeholders and sponsors.
Workplace Networks

Operational
Helps you get your job done daily

Strategic
Sources of Information Connectors

Developmental
Who you know and who you need to know.
Mentors/sponsors
Key Stakeholders
Highly open networks tie to a diverse set of individuals who don’t know one another. This type of network is often associated with faster promotions and higher bonuses.

Highly closed networks are made up of people you know who also know each other. Women and people of color more often have this structure.

Source: Damon Phillips, Diversity, Professional Careers, and Workplace Social Networks (presentation at UBS, 2012)
To their detriment, women perceive cultivating relationships and mobilizing them on their behalf as, at best, an occasional necessity rather than the key exercise of leadership. They fail to see that the practice of seeking out powerful people, cultivating favor and cashing in those chips is itself a demonstration of leadership potential.

Source: Center for Work-Life Policy
Sponsorship

Community Chest
GET OUT OF JAIL, FREE
THIS CARD MAY BE KEPT UNTIL NEEDED OR SOLD

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Mentors give advice.

Sponsors give advice and take action.
Sponsorship

“Seek out someone with real power to change your career. Would-be sponsors in large organizations are ideally two levels above you with line of sight to your role; in smaller firms, they’re either the founder or president or are part of his or her inner circle.”

Executive Coaching
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