

WANT TO BE RECOGNISED?

SELF-PROMOTION 101



A discussion and activity guide to improve your team's political acumen based on Cindy Tonkin's article in: [LEADERSHIP Excellence](#)

Getting recognised, appreciated and promoted

Want to be Recognised? Self-promotion 101

Chances are your team is populated with some competent and switched on people. Some of them naturally promote themselves. Others shy away from it.

Maybe you shy away from it too, but would like to help your team. Possibly you know how to do it, but can't explain it to them.

For your team

On a separate page at the end of this article you'll find a discussion and activity guide to work through with them.

Of course you can also consider bringing in a Political Acumen Consultant for your team.

As you read this article, consider whether your team needs coaching or training in being more politically astute: in managing their profile, promoting themselves and your team.

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Martin's a good manager. He inherited a large call centre with teams of borderline manic-depressives. Complaints were common, call dropout rates atrocious, morale was low. People clock-watched and turnover and absenteeism were high. Martin fixed it. He delivered improvements. He installed performance measures and instituted staff reward systems. He did what any good manager would do. And no one noticed. Now perhaps his manager wasn't a very astute business person. That's not the issue. Martin wasn't appreciated, didn't get applauded, and got no opportunities to advance as a result of his hard work.

There's an odd parallel in the fact that 71% of women on boards in the UK have titles. Having a title in the UK is probably like being a sport star in Australia - it gives you a profile and opens doors. So what do people do when they can't throw a ball and haven't inherited a title to achieve business success? Both Martin's story and the board statistic point to the need for our talents to be "publicised" as well as lived.

Self-promotion is an essential skill

Countless surveys list presentation and influence skills as primary for senior managers. Recent research from the *Australian Business Women's Network* cited self-promotion as the most essential skill. When I worked with Martin it became clear

that, despite all his other skills, self-promotion was what he lacked.

This goes against a common belief that ability alone will get us to our goals. I outlined this myth - the Ability Myth - in my second book, *Consulting Mastery - The Ability Myth*. In a nutshell, if your success depends on others choosing you for a position, rating your performance or putting you forward, you have to meet three requirements. Ability is just one of these. You won't get anywhere if you don't have Availability and Affability as well. It is astoundingly simple, even obvious. But you'd be surprised how few people actually do it.

Make sure people know you and what you do. The first requirement is to have a high Availability rating. Availability is about people knowing you exist. It's not about what you know, but who knows you know it. Managers with high Availability factors remember that it's not enough to do a good job; people need to know you've done it - through published KPIs, through client testimonials, by the way your staff work.

Fit in and work with others

The second requirement is Affability. This is about rapport - being likeable, fitting in, and understanding the context. As a manager, you need to have alliances, to fit the part, and to work within the culture. It doesn't necessarily mean you have to play politics, but you do have to understand politics.

Remember ability isn't enough

The third requirement is Ability. This is where most people put their attention. They get stuck improving their Ability, and miss the other two steps. They think doing a great job gets you noticed.

Sometimes it does. But if you make the network run, then you only get noticed if you do a bad job and the network fails. Even at managerial level, where the required skills are mainly soft skills, affability and availability often get overlooked.

You may think I'm suggesting that self-promoting overrides your ability to deliver. Not at all. You should have good skills to be a good manager. I also know that many managers with excellent skills have to settle for less than they want or deserve. They do so because they miss the first two steps - either they don't let people know what they're doing well, or they don't know how to fit in with the team.

Many people with ability do make it to the top. Jim Collins in *Good to Great* talks about the self-effacing leaders who bring

organisations from good to great. They may not make it into the press, but their peers and their organisation know them. Their Availability rating isn't global, but it is local.

So, if you feel under-rated or under-recognised, and are wondering why, look at how you support your self-promotion. You can gather a portfolio of your recent achievements, e-mails from happy clients, lists of projects brought in on time, comments from staff and managers. Consider stopping to appreciate what you've achieved, rather than completing the day asking "What on earth did I do today?" Once you've collected this portfolio, you're ready for the next step.

Beating the ability myth and promoting yourself and your abilities is not difficult, it's just another soft skill. Observe the successful people in your organisation, the ones who seem to get what you want, and ask yourself what they are doing that you could do. If you don't blow your own trumpet, no one else will. It is quasi-un-Australian to boast, brag or even display successes. So observe how others do it in a comfortable way, and follow their lead.





Discussion points for your team

It's one thing to know about something. It's another to put it into action. Here are some ways to move this article from knowledge to reality within your team.

1. Forward it to them or ask them to download it
2. Discuss it in your next work-in-progress meeting
3. Do some activities sparked by this article at your next offsite.

Here are some reflection and discussion points:

1. This article uses an example from a call centre environment. How is our business the same? How is our business different? What does this mean for us?
2. How do you see others in our organisation increasing their availability factor? What works, and what doesn't?

3. What are some good things we as a team have done recently that could have been promoted more? To whom would we want to promote them?
What systems can we put in place so that this kind of promotion happens more frequently?

Here are some activities the team can do in a meeting or offsite:

1. Create a team "showcase" or hall of fame of some kind: certificates, awards, brag sessions, noticeboards, a wiki.
2. Create a target list of people or teams who should know about you or your team. Action plan so that they do. Revise your list every 3 months.
3. The flipside of recognition is recognising others: whom should we recognise within our team? Who should we recognise amongst our internal customers and suppliers? What about externally? How can we do this?
4. The article lists a few things you can do to support your own self-promotion. Which do you already do? Choose 1 new one and do it for 3 months. Then review where you are. Set up some way to measure the change in your availability factor.
5. Set up a culturally appropriate way to gather testimonials from your colleagues, bosses and customers. Make sure you have a place to keep them.
6. What alliances do you need to make stronger now? How have you created these alliances? Either do that more, or find some other activities to improve them.



I'm really happy that you've joined my client list.

If our styles mesh well, I would love to work with you and your team.

There are systems, incentives and skills which will make working in an organisation more comfortable and joyful for you.

I can help you and your teams understand office politics. And if you want to play better, we can coach and train for fewer political injuries, quicker recovery and more fun while doing it.

We have packages to suit individuals or teams and we are always keen to customize an intervention to make your culture smarter, more effective and happier.

Please get in touch at cindytonkin.com/talk to talk about your political challenges. We'd love to help you out.

P.S. Most political problems aren't easily solved. Talk to me about identifying the real issues!