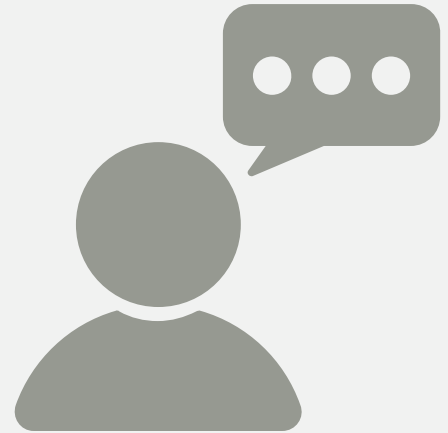


Many professionals still believe that if they simply work hard, recognition and success will naturally follow. While hard work is certainly essential, it is not enough on its own. To advance your career, it is critical to communicate your value, accomplishments, and aspirations effectively.

For many, however, the idea of “bragging” or self-promotion may feel uncomfortable or even negative—often associated with being loud, self-centered, or boastful. In reality, strategic self-promotion is a professional skill, not an act of arrogance. When done authentically, it allows you to share your contributions confidently, build visibility, and open doors to new opportunities.



WHAT IS SELF-PROMOTION?

A recent Harvard Business Review (HBR) article defines self-promotion as “the ability to communicate your interests, abilities, or achievements to others with the goal of enhancing your professional reputation (or your personal brand), gaining visibility, and improving your career prospects.”

In other words, self-promotion is about sharing your story and impact in a way that supports your professional growth. It is not about exaggeration—it is about owning your accomplishments with confidence and clarity.

WHY IS SELF-PROMOTION IMPORTANT?

According to the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), there are three primary reasons self-promotion matters:

- Talent doesn't automatically equal recognition. Even top performers can be overlooked if others don't know what they have achieved.
- Success depends on relationships. More than just your manager needs to understand the value you bring.
- Visibility drives opportunity. In lean organizations, those who stand out for their contributions are often the ones trusted with key projects and promotions.

FORMS OF SELF-PROMOTION

Self-promotion can take many forms, depending on your role and comfort level:

- Social Media: Share professional updates or thought leadership content.
- Personal Branding: Develop and communicate your professional identity (see Quick Guide #9 – Professional Branding).
- Networking: Build authentic relationships that highlight your value (see Quick Guide #6 – Networking).
- Continuous Self-Development: Invest in learning and growth that strengthens your professional story.

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE SELF-PROMOTION

1. Clarify Your Value

Reflect on what makes you stand out. Identify your strengths, key skills, and unique contributions. Consider what others often praise you for or rely on you to deliver.

2. Track and Share Your Wins

Maintain a “brag book”—a simple list of achievements, project outcomes, and positive feedback. Use these examples when writing performance reviews, interviewing, or updating your LinkedIn profile.

3. Practice a Confident Introduction

Develop a clear 30-second professional introduction that summarizes who you are, what you do, and the value you bring. Use it when meeting new colleagues, networking, or joining new teams.

4. Communicate Strategically

- Speak up in meetings with data, ideas, or progress updates.
- Leverage LinkedIn or internal newsletters to share key accomplishments or insights.
- Acknowledge others' contributions while highlighting your role and impact.
- Ask thoughtful, informed questions that show engagement and expertise.

5. Be Intentional and Purposeful

- Tailor your message to your audience.
- Focus on impact rather than activity—what changed because of your work?
- Use confident, professional, and authentic language when describing your achievements.

6. Ask for Visibility

Seek out opportunities that showcase your skills.

- Volunteer for high-profile projects or cross-functional teams.
- Request feedback to understand how others perceive your impact.
- Share your career goals with your leader and ask for their support in helping you achieve them.

FIVE BEHAVIORS TO AVOID

1

Using language that minimizes your accomplishments (e.g., “I just helped with...”).

2

Overusing jargon or buzzwords that obscure your real impact.

3

Neglecting to acknowledge team contributions.

4

Waiting silently for recognition instead of sharing your successes.

5

Exaggerating or promoting inauthentically.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Self-promotion is not about ego—it’s about empowerment. When you clearly and confidently communicate your value, you allow others to see the strengths, skills, and achievements that make you effective. Bragging better means owning your success while uplifting others along the way.

RESOURCES

- Book: *Promote Yourself; The New Rules for Career Success* by Dan Schawel
- HBR Article: *How to Self-Promote (when you Don't Like to Self-Promote)* by Jenny Fernandez
- TED Talk: *5 Steps to Building a Personal Brand You Feel Good About* by Marcos Salazar (6:14 minutes)