
FOR WOMEN SCHOOLED IN MODESTY

Is self-promotion a gender issue? “Traditionally that’s what people think,” says Kare Anderson. “But there’s no research [that I know of] to support it. Maybe women and men go about it in different ways.”

In school, girls are often taught to sit back and let the teacher recognize their brilliance. Women carry that attitude into the workplace. They tend to believe that good work is its own reward.

Sara Cormeny, proprietor of Paperlantern.com in Washington, DC, agrees. Cormeny updates résumés for women through the Women’s Information Network. She says women are too concerned about not taking credit for “team” accomplishments.

“They have a faultless honesty about saying that they ‘helped,’” she says. Cormeny tells them not to lie, but to acknowledge their contributions to a project.

Other ways of tooting your own horn include the following:

- Increase your visibility by speaking at industry-related functions, running a staff meeting, training people in new policies or procedures, and joining professional interest groups.
- Beware of gender-based language traps: in talking of their achievements, women tend to use “we,” whereas men say “I.” But also be aware that “I” may be looked upon less favorably.
- Talk about your achievements as “fact-fact-fact.” Quantifying your accomplishments is not bragging. For example, say, “*My outreach campaign increased ad revenues by 50%, which enabled our magazine to realize a profit for the first time in three years.*”

- Use testimonials. When people praise your work, ask, “Would you mind dropping a note to my boss? She likes knowing how our projects are working out.”
- Rely on third-party endorsements to create a buzz about your work. Have you heard the one about the two naval graduates who made a pact to brag like crazy about each other—and became the two youngest admirals in naval history? Make sure the buzz is very specific and obviously true, and that you reciprocate in kind.

SUMMING UP

1. In today’s and tomorrow’s constantly evolving workplace, you must promote your potential as well as your accomplishments.
2. Promoting your potential is one aspect of being your own best advocate in the workplace.
3. You can take an active role in building your reputation for excellent work by practicing some of the following techniques:
 - a. Developing your leadership qualities
 - b. Bringing your boss solutions, not problems
 - c. Creating relationships by volunteering to help on projects beyond the scope of your job description
 - d. Finding ways to distribute your work in ways that brings kudos to you *and others*