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New Study Reveals Senior Executive Women Still Struggle With Self Promotion

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Just because you've made it to the top doesn't mean you can rest on your laurels. A new [study](#) released last week reveals that senior women executives still struggle with some of the career advancement challenges that women in middle management do. The research conducted in November 2013 by [Barbara Annis and Associates](#) in partnership with [Thomson Reuters](#) and [Women of Influence](#) was the result of a survey of 326 senior women leaders across North America.

Some of the top career advancement challenges cited were "in both navigating the system and accessing informal networks. The challenge is in **self-promotion**, advocating for themselves, and expressing their talents."

One might surmise that these women made it to the top of their organizations because they understood the politics and learned how to work the system to their benefit. It would also be an obvious assumption that they are good at promoting their accomplishments and selling their ideas across the organization. But in the general area of self-initiation, women leaders still reported a high level of difficulty advocating for themselves. They acknowledge that maintaining their leadership position necessitates ongoing self-promotion as well as political savvy.

Promotion is the tool for competition; to gain access to the networks and information that impact your career. It is necessary to [master the art of promotion](#) to both get to the top and stay on top. You can't build the relationships you need without it. You can't get visibility across the organization without it. Access to the informal networks in the workplace that have power and influence is best achieved through effective self-promotion.

The net effect is that there are fewer opportunities for women in their career advancement if they are not outspoken and explicit about what they have achieved and can achieve.

Women still believe that their talent and hard work will get them ahead. Called out as one of the seven pitfalls for women in business in the white paper, self-promotion was referred to

by the participants in the study as awkward and not always helpful for their advancement. Because of their reluctance to promote themselves, women are viewed in the workplace as lacking self-confidence. As a result, they are often compared negatively to men, who see themselves as entitled to promotions and worthy of greater compensation.

Women hesitate to talk about their accomplishments, but when they do, they mostly talk about their past successes not their future potential. Men not only engage in more self-promotion, take credit for successes, but also let others know of their potential. This is where women fall short.

How do you promote your potential?

Understanding your value proposition is the foundation of authentic self-promotion. Your value proposition is the unique way you deliver the work that contributes to positive business outcomes. Positioning yourself to help others achieve their goals is a powerful way to highlight your accomplishments *and* potential. Tailor your conversation to align your value proposition with other's goals and interests. The result is they know how you impact positive business results, and you are now on their radar screen for future opportunities. Positioning yourself as part of a solution is effective self-promotion because it is based on past achievements *and* future potential.

Successfully navigating the workplace requires knowledge of the dynamics and a commitment to building strategic relationships. It is also about learning how to craft your conversations with the people who have the power and influence so they readily get what you bring to the table. In other words, it takes political savvy to self-promote effectively.

In their article, [Gender and Career Success: The Facilitative Role of Political Skill](#), authors Pamela Perrewe and Debra Nelson, state that Women lack both access to important organizational information and effective positioning. Positioning involves getting into positions to take advantage of opportunities when they are presented, as well as helping to create opportunities.

Positioning oneself to gain access to the internal networks and information is best accomplished through savvy self-promotion.

Self-promotion is critical for one's success no matter what your position in the organization. It takes political savvy to know how to promote yourself and your potential effectively. It also takes an understanding of the workplace dynamics to identify who in the organization needs to know this information about you in order to leverage your career potential.