

Ep 77: How to Position Yourself for Promotion

Evaluate and take action to get your promotion



- Ask: "what do you need to see from me to get your support to be promoted?"
 - We suggest flipping the conversation with your boss and go on defense so your boss can go on offense. Instead of "Why am I not being promoted?" ask "What do you need to see from me to get your support to be promoted?"
 - This creates space to have a forwarding conversation because your boss doesn't feel like they have to defend their actions. It also signals that you are thinking about the broader team versus just yourself.
 - It forces your boss to be clear on what is still missing for them. These can then become performance criteria that can have actionable KPI's against.
 - It is interesting how this question can transform the dynamic between you and your boss. When your boss is playing offense, s/he is naturally acting in support of your goal.
- Make your boss look good.
 - This can be easier said than done as sometimes we will battle with our ego in making this happen. This is an essential piece in positioning yourself for promotion. This can take several forms:
 - Say nice (and true) things about your boss to their superiors and colleagues. When you put positivity into the system, it tends to return the favor. Nothing good has come from speaking bad things about your boss. It needs to be authentic.
 - Provide suggestions for how you can help your boss increase capacity and deliver better results. And take responsibility for delivering them. You should approach this with a level of humility.
 - Make sure your boss is never surprised. This can of course be challenging because you can't predict everything that could happen. But when you anticipate something, say something. Don't work in a vacuum. Prep your boss before they go into meetings with their superiors, give them talking points, help them look knowledgeable and in-the-loop.
 - Help facilitate team dynamics. This means focusing on how to be a really good team member versus just delivering on your slice of the pie. Helping to facilitate culture not only makes your boss look good, it helps people see you are capable of this really important part of leadership.
- Operate like you are in the role two promotions ahead.
 - This is especially true if within these moves you are switching from more of a doer to a manager. Many get stuck here for one reason, they focus too much on what they are doing and not enough on how to help the team/group/business operate more efficiently and effectively.
 - A couple of areas to look at and judge if a person is ready for a promotion are:
 - The ability to think strategically: Is the person just doing what they are told or are they always looking for ways to improve status-quo? Do they understand the business at a high level and able to participate in big picture conversations.
 - The ability to influence: Are they able to inspire those around them to align to a certain direction without trying to brute force them, manipulate them, coerce them or go through management.
 - Do they take responsibility for themselves and their actions: When they are wrong, do they admit it. If they wrong someone else, do they fix it. Do they consistently and with integrity champion the culture.
 - Do they make an effort to lift others up: This is about carrying others' success as much as your own. This is the biggest signal that an individual understands the pie is more important than their slice.
 - Are they focused yet flexible: Can they embrace the mission and vision yet able to accommodate obstacles in their path. Can they develop and action solutions versus always bringing problems. Are they self-motivated versus always needing direction and reassurance.
 - There are more performance based criteria that are more industry and function specific, but when someone is in limbo with regards to promotion, they are generally good performers, but missing one of these.
- Get allies who will act as advocates.
 - Your reputation is very important to getting the support you need for promotion. This comes from others putting good reviews into the system. Look in building allies in two areas:
 - Those who get a vote. Direct voters or whose word to the voters could make or break your promotion.
 - Those who influence. These are people who could be colleagues, internal/external team members, direct reports, anyone with a POV that would build social proof on whether you are ready for promotion.
 - How do you do this?
 - For those who get a vote: Visibility. This is something to work on with your boss and is directed by the question, "Who do I need to get on my side to support my promotion?"
 - For those who influence: This can take on many forms but it always comes down to how you make people feel. Find out how you can truly make an impact on them and their dreams and goals. This involves human-based relationships.
 - This takes work. Avoid being overwhelmed and pick a few to focus on in the categories you have the biggest opportunity to move the needle and have neglected thus far.