

**Subject:** The Bashful Art of Self Promotion - Part I



Dear Richard,

If you want to join the Tall Poppy club, I have good news. New Zealand is still a land of opportunity for those who wish to work hard, gain skills and experience and then **promote their differentiation!**

Hard work alone will not guarantee your success, and like it or not publicity and in particular self-promotion holds the key to your successful future.

Firstly, you need to ignore the myths:

- The hardest working get paid more
- Worthwhile performance doesn't have to be sold - it speaks for itself
- Self-promotion is unprofessional

A starting point to your new direction is to have a Life Plan, and yet most of us spend more time planning our vacation than we do our lives.

Your life plan will include: family, social, financial, education, health, fitness, spiritual and finally career goals. In the case of your career it is important to understand what you are trying to promote in order to determine the most appropriate promotion or self-promotion methods.

In deciding to promote your career:

1. Conduct an assessment of where your career is today.
2. Decide what you want your career to look like say two to three years from today.
3. Develop an action plan.
4. Form accountable partnerships similar to a "buddy" system.
5. Meet regularly to review progress.
6. Produce continuing career results.

Perhaps you are already in a career that you are happy with but lack opportunities for career progression. Perhaps those with influence do not know what results you currently produce or what you could do for the organisation.

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I recently coached a person who was in an IT department. The projects he implemented had a wide-ranging impact not only in New Zealand but in Australia too. However, no one was aware and so his career was languishing. By coaching him over a six month period he made known the results he had produced and became visible to his employer beyond the IT department. He made presentations and wrote papers on the revenue enhancing and risk management implications of his projects. This reputation building resulted in him being promoted outside of the IT department into a general management role.

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This is the kind of result you can expect, but will your manager promote your results to others in the company?

A good leader will. However, there are poor leaders who will claim they, and not you, were responsible for the result, or worse still stay silent in relation to your accomplishments.

If your leader will not give you the recognition you deserve then you may need another advocate within your company, or engage in self-promotion.

Before finding an advocate or engaging in self-promotion answer these questions:

- What are your special talents?
- Do you have unique skills?
- What do you want to be known for?
- What image do you want others to have of you?
- What do I want my career to look like two or three years from now?
- How assertive do I need to be?

Having answered these questions you need to put self-promotion in the context of your business:

1. What is the culture of our company? Is it a culture where outside of my immediate manager others regularly get recognition? If so then it will not appear out of place for an advocate to talk of results on your behalf, or for you to self-promote.
2. What results have you produced? Is it something truly out of the ordinary worthy of recognition? Do not promote trivia.
3. When and with whom should the visibility occur either through an advocate or by self-promotion?
  - Do you need to share it immediately?
  - Can you discuss your achievements as part of a regular session with your leader?
  - Do you need to share it with key company decision makers?

All of this discussion presupposes that you are in a company that values talent and where there are definite opportunities for career progression.

However this may not always be the case and at some point you may face a personal decision that your next career step will need to be with another company. At that point it will become necessary to have parallel plans of internal and external self-promotion.

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To achieve this you will need to have a ruthless road map:

- What companies are my target markets?
- How will I establish the correct image?
- Stretch your resources. Allocate time and money to your effort. The money will be required to join organisations, attend events and develop your personal promotional material.
- Start and maintain a promotional plan.
- Become visible in target organisations.
- Develop your 'marketing' material. This may include a portfolio, CV, proposals or business cards.
- Gain leverage through friends, acquaintances and referral sources.

Now is the time to blow your own horn! Become part of the business word of mouth; learn how to brag about yourself and speak and write about your accomplishments. Success breeds success. For example, have you considered an addition to your email signature line "*responsible for 5 new key accounts last month*"?

What are your five biggest, proudest accomplishments?

What is the key benefit from your accomplishments to your coaches, employer or potential employer? What information might they be looking for?

The sooner you identify them, learn them and practice delivering your accomplishments then the sooner you will become more comfortable in talking about them as opportunities present themselves.

Do not denigrate yourself. "Oh, it's nothing" is the retort I hear too often. Accept the compliment with good grace and then briefly say how you did what it was that you are receiving the praise for.

Your accomplishments may be worthy of press releases, web site announcements or provide you with opportunities to make presentations to business groups.

Look at your current resume. Every sentence or bullet point should have a quantified or qualified accomplishment.

Why are you unique? What position do you occupy compared to those similarly qualified? What is your 'unfair advantage'? This must clearly show through in your resume.

Remember each employment advertisement the search firm or potential employer runs will receive between 80 and 100 resumes.

## **You need a Marketing Plan!**

### **Next month : The Bashful Art of Self-Promotion Part II - Marketing 'Me Inc.'**

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This edition's Book Review:

#### **The Five Patterns of Extraordinary Careers: The Guide for Achieving Success and Satisfaction** - by James M Citrin, Richard A. Smith

Jim Citrin and Richard Smith are consultants from the head-hunting firm Spencer Stuart. They offer five differentiating principles that can be harnessed and used by everyone:

1. Understand the value of you by translating your knowledge and experience into action and building your personal value at each phase of your career.
  2. Practice benevolent leadership - not by clawing your way to the top but by being carried there.
  3. Solve the permission paradox of not getting the job without experience and not getting experience without the job.
  4. Differentiating yourself using the 20/80 principle of performance by storming past pre-defined jobs to create breakthrough ideas and deliver unexpected impact.
  5. Finding the right fit of your strengths, passions and people. Gravitating towards positions that you are best at and have a passion for and working with people you like and respect.
- This book brings into focus how you can actively manage your career rather than waiting for it to happen.
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#### **HAVE YOU RECEIVED VALUE FROM LEADING WAYS?**

If you have, I'd like to hear about it. I would be interested in any case studies you would care to share with me. Constructive criticism is welcome too! Please feel free to drop me a line when you have a minute. You may also wish to share this e-newsletter with someone else and encourage him or her to subscribe.

Wishing you every success in growing your career

