

GET NOTICED BY SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Have you ever thought how you can move upward faster with the talent you possess? You're good at your job. You show up on time every day. Your long-term professional goals are well-defined, and you work toward them consistently.

However, your progression has been hampered by being surrounded by similarly high-achieving colleagues, and these attributes may not be enough to make you stand out—especially if you're employed by a large organization.

No matter how great at your job you are, don't expect people to naturally notice who you are and how much you have achieved. In fact, you're likely going to have to take a few extra steps to turn the heads of the higher-ups.

How do you get noticed by senior leadership?

There are a number of ways to achieve this, and it begins with a growth mindset. Demonstrate your commitment to your growth and to the company by investing in learning. Take courses directly related to your field, and *read, read, read*. An added bonus is this can even involve your direct superior - ask your boss (and boss's boss) if they can recommend any books related to what you want to learn. Investing in your growth will not only keep you relevant, but helps maintain good health (its great brain training!!). Neuroscience is proving just how valuable learning is in keeping our neural pathways active, reducing stress levels and potentially delaying the onset of Alzheimers! Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck has a perfect quote to summarise this - *"Picture your brain forming new connections as you meet the challenge and learn. Keep on going."*

The easiest way to make a positive impression on leadership is to simply excel at what you do. But in order to do that, you need to first thoroughly understand what it is that you should be doing. *"Discuss with [your boss] what success looks like in your role, then exceed those expectations. Make sure that your boss gives you very specific expectations that are both quantitative and qualitative,"* says Natasha Bowman, CEO & author. Once you have those goals figured out, it's time to execute on them. *"Make sure it's a pattern of you reliably delivering results so that when you speak with leadership, you're able to demonstrate your value through actions,"* notes Foram Soni Sheth, Co-Founder and Career Coach.

Are you one of those who knows your numbers and take ownership of your work? If you are, *congratulations* you may skip this paragraph. However, if you are not, always remember to be ready to discuss the performance metrics and business analytics that matter most (revenue, profit and loss, etc.) in your department, especially in moments when all eyes are on you — such as presentations, meetings, or project reports. This is your opportunity to show senior leaders why they should be paying attention to you.

Leaders value those who solve issues, and not find 100 ways that things won't work. If you have new, creative ways of thinking that can help you overcome the issue/s at hand more quickly, share it openly to show what you have to contribute. People who challenge the current process and communicate the possibilities of a different solution are more noticeable, and thus given more opportunities and

responsibilities. Additional points given if you can find out what stresses your boss the most, and then focus some of your energy and time toward tackling those problems.

In general, powerful questions have the ability to change or grow a career or business, from the inside out. Brian David Crane of Caller Smart Inc. opines, *“Having a positive attitude and being able to ask ‘why’ are two attributes that all high-potential employees should have. Curiosity indicates a vested interest in the underlying ‘why’ that drives what we’re doing, while a positive attitude makes you a pleasant person to be around.”* Research shows that asking more questions builds emotional intelligence, leading to better soft skills - key in leadership at work and interpersonal relationship building.

Public speaking is one of the most common fears, but if you can shake off that terror and become comfortable with it, it can pay off big for your career. One good way is to speak at conferences.

“Don't wait for the invitation to come to you. Get to know conference organizers, as well as past speakers and sponsors”, says Ben Brooks, CEO of New York City–based PILOT, which helps people find happiness at work. “Larger conferences will have a more formal process for vetting and accepting speakers; speaking at smaller, local gatherings can be as simple as volunteering for the job. In either case, coordinate with your manager and public relations team” he continued.

Great leaders don't just wait to be asked; they put themselves in positions and situations where they're more likely to be asked. Look for opportunities to connect and collaborate with other key players in your organization. When you build connections, you expand your network of allies and increase your visibility and influence. When you work collaboratively and cross-functionally, your name will keep coming up for all the right reasons. As the king of building connections (Ivan Misner) says *“First, you have to be visible in the community. You have to get out there and connect with people. It's not called net-sitting or net-eating. It's called networking. You have to work at it.”*

If you're looking for specific projects to take on at your company, you can't go wrong with internal efforts. Leaders most commonly worry about two things in the organization: 1) Revenue & 2) Its people. Find ways for you to contribute internally to the organization such as improving outdated processes which can help the employees save more time or perhaps you start internal networking for employees to get to know each other, or you create a group to solve a business problem.

And to really drive home the value of your efforts, *“ask to speak with a leader of the organization to share your thoughts, why it's important for you to lead this initiative, why it would help the organization and ask [for] their support. This will help you get directly noticed by a leader and they'll have a direct hand in helping you build your internal initiative,”* Sheth suggests.

There is no short path to getting noticed. And even if you find one, you may not have what you need to do the job well if you get there prematurely. But if you focus on these areas with dedication, patience, and the acceptance that growing a stellar career takes some time, you'll keep moving in the right direction and be ready for what's next when it comes.

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