

7 ways to show you're ready for a promotion

Demonstrate you're prepared before you ask to move up.

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If you want a promotion, you shouldn't just ask. If you're a serious emerging leader you must demonstrate you have what it takes to move up and excel.

Here's how.

1. Offer solutions

Show your value to the company by demonstrating a desire and ability to solve problems. "Show you're not just thinking about your position but the company's performance as a whole," says Zach Cusimano, COO at mobile application maker Bizness Apps. "If you see a process that could be improved, let someone know. Managers love to see critical thinking."

2. Delegate

If you want to step up in leadership, make sure you're ready to lead. "Managers need to hold people accountable, and those performance conversations can be awkward at best," says Elene Cafasso, founder of Enerpace Executive Coaching. "Can you accept that as part of your job? Can you give folks room to accomplish the team's goals their way, or do you require absolute control over the process?"

3. Work smart

When it comes to communicating you're ready for a promotion, you need to work strategically, says Cafasso. "There's a common myth that says, 'if I just work hard enough' or 'if I just do a good enough job' I'll get noticed and promoted," she explains.

“Working harder doesn't get you ahead. It's working on the right things, cultivating the right relationships and making sure those who can influence your career know about it. It's much more effective from a career management standpoint to do five things well and promote your accomplishments than to try to do 25 things. Prioritize based on your values; time block to make sure you execute,” she advises.

4. Let your work ethic speak for itself

Have you mastered your current position? “Leave no doubts in your work ethic. Show you're handling your current work load with ease,” says Cusimano. “Your numbers should reflect the mastery of your current role. There's no hiding a top performer and it is hard to deny their impact on the business.”

5. Look the part

Your appearance should reflect your level of professionalism, says executive coach Susan Foster. “Don't underestimate looking professional. You don't have to spend a lot of money on clothes, but you do have to be neatly groomed, and dressed appropriately for your office.”

6. Share your out-of-office successes

Speak up about your leadership experience outside of work, suggests Cheryl Palmer, career coach and owner of Call to Career. “Even if employees haven't had the opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills on the job, other experience may be persuasive. For example, an employee may have taken on a leadership role in a professional association. Or the employee may have used his or her leadership ability in the community. This is relevant experience and can help an employee build a case for a promotion.”

7. Establish a development plan

“Work with your boss to establish a professional development plan for yourself that involves increasing levels of responsibility in support of your long-term goals, says leadership coach Jené Kapela of Jene Kapela Leadership Solutions. “By doing this your boss will know what your long-term goals are and will see that you are successfully working towards them.”