

What is Your “Promotability Quotient”?

By Julie Godshall Brown

Whether your company's talent development program is formal or informal, and somewhat regardless of culture, there is a commonality among those who are viewed by management as promotable to the next level of the organization. If you have the desire to be considered for a promotion, read on

Of all of the attributes that top management will consider in your career potential with their firm, one of the most important is trustworthiness. Consider the owner, partners, or top management's point of view: the company is their livelihood, their identity, their baby. To make their company successful and lives easier, their goal is to put the right people in charge. From the trenches, where there are often politics and internal competition among coworkers, this can be hard to see, but the answer may be as simple as that. Trustworthiness includes fiscal responsibility, but also so much more. Are you as cautious and conservative regarding company resources as you would be with your own? Do you care about your company as if it belongs to you? Do you follow through on all of your assigned tasks without needing constant prodding from your management or your peers? The answer to all of these questions should be “yes” if you want to be viewed as a trustworthy member of the business team.

Secondly, are you truly committed and capable of doing your current job well and moving to the next level? Do you read industry publications as well as those of your client base so that you are better able to perform your job than anyone else? Dedicate yourself to being the best that you can be! Are you cross-training for other positions within your company? A breadth of knowledge is one of the most valuable assets that you can provide your company. Develop and share your knowledge for the better good of your team!

So many articles have been written about the lack of loyalty between employers and employees. Given corporate scandal and downsizing, the media would have you believe that you cannot trust your employer and that loyalty in dealing with them is unnecessary. Given that the majority of firms are smaller, privately held ones, with direct owner involvement, loyalty is everything. Most business owners make decisions with their heart as well as with their brain. When a firm knows that an employee is loyal to them and their company, that individual will reap rewards in the form of dedication and promotability. Saying this, employers are also well aware of those that “poison the water”, are negative influences, are there to “collect a paycheck,” and regardless of their capability, will normally not reward them with promotional opportunities. After all, why should authority be given to anyone who does not represent the corporate values?

Fourthly, if you desire to be rewarded financially and with additional responsibility, you must prove to management that you are willing to do whatever it takes to be successful. When the clock turns 5:00 pm, the dedicated employee will not leave unless the day's work is finished. An employer expects professional employees to “get the job done” regardless of the time on the clock. Do you take responsibility for your own professional development, or do you wait for your firm to offer certification courses or suggest training. Everyone has “underdeveloped strengths” (my friend Greg Blake, an outstanding speaker and teambuilding coach, uses this as a synonym for weaknesses) that need to be improved. Wouldn't it be preferable to take it upon yourself to develop your talents than wait to be asked? After all, regardless of your company's training offerings, ownership of your professional development belongs to you.

Lastly, let top management or your business owner know that you are ready to take on additional responsibility. You may feel that they already know this, but if you have not had a specific conversation with your manager regarding your career goals, you cannot assume that they know that you desire to be promoted. If you concerned about having a direct conversation about your goals, consider taking on projects or participate in a taskforce that provides you with visibility to top management. Offer to write articles in industry publications. Often when others in your profession recognize you as an expert, your reputation will come full circle to those within your

firm. It is critical, however, to be open and honest regarding your career goals. Your career is your own to manage. The only risk that you take in making your management aware of your goals, is to find out that there is not an opportunity to move to the next level within your firm. If you truly desire to go to the next level in your career, and are committed to your profession, finding this out gives you the answer—it is time to begin your search for a new position outside of your firm.

Julie Godshall Brown is the President of Godshall Staffing Services, a locally owned, full service recruiting firm. She holds a Masters degree in Personnel and Employee Relations from University of South Carolina and a Bachelor's degree in Marketing from Clemson. She and her husband, Drew, have two boys, Alex (7) and Hayden (5). Julie is also the President of the Greenville Society of Human Resources Management.