

Women's Leadership Coaching: Communication Strategies for Career Advancement

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Abstract: Many women falsely believe that a job well done is all that is needed for career advancement. However, women need to master specific communication strategies particularly self-promotion and negotiation in order to advance their careers and reduce the gender pay gap. Unlike men, women must also to overcome the negative impact of gender stereotyping that sometimes occurs when they self-promote and negotiate. This paper provides evidence from selected literature and research on effective communication strategies for women seeking career advancement, greater success and/or senior leadership positions. Finally, tools that can be used during the coaching process to enable successful outcomes are reviewed.

Keywords: Self-Promotion, Self-Advocacy, Bragging, Impression Management, and Negotiation

Introduction

I am interested in learning about how coaching relationships focused on improving communication strategies for women professionals can help them in their career advancement or business success, ideally resulting in increased compensation and responsibility. I also want to find out if coaching aspiring women leaders to effectively self-promote can help companies achieve their goal of increasing the percentage of women leaders within their ranks. There is an ongoing debate about why women are still underrepresented in senior leadership positions in the public and private sectors. Furthermore, a persistent pay gap between men and women continues unabated despite passage of the Equal Pay Act more than fifty years ago.

While I had a long and successful career in the financial services industry rising to top leadership positions in a traditionally male dominated field, I noticed that many women were held back by their inability to effectively promote their abilities, ambition and accomplishments; negotiate for increased responsibility and higher pay, and actively network with mentors and potential sponsors. During most of my career, I was a mentor and sponsor of female colleagues and direct reports as well as a sounding board for many professional women in senior roles. Recently, I became more directly involved in women's leadership through my role on the Leadership Council for The Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard College. Through my participation in Leadership Council, in my role as a facilitator at Women's Leadership Conferences, while attending women's conferences, and in my business coaching professional women, I discovered that women's failure to effectively promote themselves, their ambition, and their accomplishments was a key impediment to their career advancement. This paper primarily focuses on self-promotion and negotiation communication examining potential applications for coaching women on ways to achieve greater career success through self-promotional communication strategies.

Review of Selected Literature

The sources for my project included two books recommended to me by Dr. Rochelle Cooper in response to my expressed interest in women & self-promotion; Stop Whining & Start Winning: 8 Sure ways for women to thrive in business by Molly Dickinson Shepard, Founder and CEO of The Leader's Edge as well as Brag! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn without Blowing It, by Peggy Klaus. Dr. Cooper, an Executive Coach has worked extensively on Women's Leadership issues; we both sit on the Leadership Council of the Athena Center and have facilitated women's leadership summits together. My own review of Women's Leadership books on Amazon.com included two books which I read: Women Don't Ask, The High Cost of Avoiding Negotiation and Positive Strategies for Change by Linda Babcock and Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office 101 by Lois Frankel. In addition, I read parts of How Remarkable Women Lead by Joanna Barsh and Susie Cranston based on research from the Centered Leadership Project, Her Place at the Table, A Woman's Guide to Negotiating Five Key Challenges to Leadership Success by Deborah Kolb, and Standing at the Crossroad, Next Steps for High Achieving Women by Marian Ruderman. Other sources included content on www.WomensSuccessCoaching.com created by Bonnie Marcus, an Executive Coach and self-promotion expert. Her website includes a podcast on self-promotion strategies for women. Her blog entries for Forbes.com "Mastering the Art of Authentic Confident Self-Promotion" and "Self-Promotion is a Political Skill" and a press release on "Overcoming the Fear of Self-Promotion" found on www.marketwire.com had useful tips for women interested in developing their self-promotion skills. Marcus's post on self-promotion led me to read a 2011 Catalyst study, "The Myth of the Ideal Worker: Does Doing all the Right Things Really Get Women Ahead?" This study provides evidence-based data on the importance for women to engage in self-promotion for career advancement and increased compensation.

In addition, I conducted a word search on self-promotion and negotiation on Columbia University's online library database and found several articles that highlighted risks associated with self-promotion and

negotiation by women. Of particular interest was an article in *Psychology of Women Quarterly* by Corinne A. Moss-Racusin and Laurie A. Rudman, “Disruptions in Women’s Self-Promotion: The Backlash Avoidance Model” and one in the *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, “Self-Promotion as a Risk Factor for Women: The Costs and Benefits of Counterstereotypical Impression Management” by Laurie Rudman. “Gender and Impression Management: Playing the Promotion Game” by Val Singh et al in the *Journal of Business Ethics* explored this topic as well. Several articles in the popular press including one in the *NY Times*, “How to Attack the Gender Pay Gap? Speak Up” reviewed the challenges facing women around negotiation as well as programs to help women improve their negotiation skills. Finally, an article entitled, “Girls allowed” in *Training & Coaching Today*, by Stephanie Sparrow emphasized tailored coaching strategies for aspiring women leaders in the UK focused on helping women identify and articulate their achievements in an authentic style.

“The White House Project Report: Benchmarking Women’s Leadership” (TWHP) provided valuable data and commentary on the lack of women in top leadership positions and on the persistent income disparity between men and women. A Catalyst report, “The Double Bind Dilemma for Women in Leadership, Damned if You Do, Doomed if You Don’t” describes the double bind women face when they communicate in ways that violate gender norms. Two 2012 Catalyst Census reports: “Fortune 500 Women Executive Officers” and “Fortune 500 Women Board of Directors” provided current data on the low percentages of women leaders at Fortune 500 companies. Finally, the Catalyst report “The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women’s Representation on Boards” (2004-2008), and “The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity” (2004) provide compelling data on the financial benefits for companies with diverse senior leadership and boards.

During my search on women’s leadership coaching, I found a recent book by Averil Leimon et al entitled, Coaching Women to Lead. Leimon argues that a specific coaching approach is required to support women through the different phases of their career. She notes that women are more focused on the “doing” than on promoting their accomplishments, and more subtle in displaying their ambition than men. (Leimon, p.156) These traits can hold women back because often companies have unwritten rules of

recognition that require aspiring leaders to make their views and ambition more explicit in meetings and at other high visibility events. Several Harvard Business Review articles on women’s leadership were also helpful in understanding some of the challenges facing women on topics such as sponsorship and visioning.

Finally, I created a survey, which included questions from the Athena Center for Leadership Studies’ “Leadership Assessment Survey” related to communication, negotiation and networking. I sent the anonymous survey through Survey Monkey to male and female professionals to determine if the women’s communication approach differed from the men and if age and/or experience were contributing factors. The survey included responses from 26 men and 53 women across a range of ages and experience levels.

Table 1 – Self-Promotion & Bragging Defined

DEFINITIONS OF SELF-PROMOTION & BRAGGING	
Author/Source	Description
Klaus, (2003)	<p>Brag: To talk about your best self (interests, ideas, and accomplishments) with pride and passion in a conversational manner intended to (incite) admiration, interest and wonder, without pretense or overstatement--- in other words, without being obnoxious.”</p> <p>Brag bite: “Snippets of impressive information about one’s best self, expressed in a brief, quotable manner. They function as memory insurance so that people will remember something compelling about you. They can be dropped into conversations as single gems or woven together to create longer bragalogues.”</p> <p>Bragologue: “Ranging from a 30 second elevator pitch to a 3 minute monologue, information about one’s self that is conveyed in a conversational, story like fashion that’s memorable and elicits interest, excitement and/or admiration.”</p> <p>Brag bag: “A collection of all the information about one’s best self that can be easily accessed: accomplishments, passions, and interests—the colorful details that describe who one is personally and professionally.” p. xxiv (for all definitions shown)</p>
Dictionary.com	Brag: To use boastful language; boast; He bragged endlessly about his high score.
Sheppard (2005)	Bragging: Whatever is being said “seems like its out of context...brought up for the sole purpose of making themselves seem important, smart, wealthy or powerful...and there is usually an air of self-absorption and presumption.” p.81
Sheppard (2005)	Self-Promotion: “bringing up your skills in a conversation...underscoring ... skills and accomplishments, and linking them to whatever she wants to promote...” p.79 “To represent your self in a positive way at opportune times.” p.73
Babcock et al (2007)	Self-promotion: “describing one’s qualities and accomplishments” p. 97

Marcus (Jan 2013)	Self-promotion: “taking credit for their accomplishments and across the organization to gain visibility and credibility.” Blog entry, “Self-promotion is Political Skill”
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Table 2 – Impression Management Defined

Author/Source	Description
Singh, et al., (2002)	“ Impression Management is the process whereby individuals seek to influence the perception of others about their own image.” (Rosenfeldt et al., 1995). To manage the impression we create; “through the construction of desirable social identities, our public selves come closer to ourselves. We seek to influence how we are perceived and therefore, the way in which others treat us.” (p.78)
Singh, et al., (2002)	Types of Impression Management (IM) Strategies: “ Self-focused strategies include self-promotion, self-presentation and self-identification.” “ Manager-focused IM refers to upward influencing strategies such as ingratiation and networking.” “ Job-focused IM refers to the extra contractual aspects of high performance and commitment” (p.78 for all definitions)
Guadagno, et al., (2007)	“ Impression management , also called self-presentation , is the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them.” Individuals manage their behavior and personal characteristics in the presence of others in an attempt to create a specific impression on their audience.” “ Impression management is usually strategic; but is not usually deceptive...people typically present aspects of themselves oriented toward making their desired impression.” (p. 484)

Table 3 – Negotiation Defined

Author/Source	Description
Babcock (2007)	“Rather than a battle between adversaries, negotiation has increasingly been seen as ideally, a collaborative process aimed at finding the best solutions for everyone involved.” (p. ix)
Dictionary.com	“mutual discussion and arrangement of the terms of a transaction or agreement: <i>the negotiation of a treaty.</i> ”

Historical Context & Current Situation

Although the Equal Pay Act was passed roughly 50 years ago, professional women earn only 78.7 cents for every dollar earned by a man. African American women make 64% and Hispanic women make only 52% of what white men make. (TWHHP p. 10) According to the National Committee on Pay Equity, the

result of the prevailing wage gap is an estimated \$700,000 to \$2,000,000 lifetime loss of income for women depending on education level. While women receive the majority of college degrees and are well represented in entry and mid level positions in all sectors of the economy, they have made little progress advancing to boardrooms and executive suites. According to The White House Project Report women comprise only 18% of the top leadership positions across ten major sectors. As of the 2012 Catalyst Census of Fortune 500 companies, only 17% of board seats and 14% of executive officer positions were held by women. Women of color hold 19% and 3% respectively. Only 4% of the CEOs are women and 25% of companies still have no women on their executive team. (Catalyst 2012 Census).

According to Financial Times estimates, in 2008 women made up half the workforce in the UK, but represented only 2% of the top jobs and in the legal profession earned 50% less than men. (Training & Coaching Today 2008) Research has shown that women must represent at least 30% of leadership positions in order to move beyond gender and build transformation across leadership fields.

Importantly, companies with more women in their senior ranks have significantly better financial performance. For instance, when women leaders are represented in meaningful numbers, “the bottom line improves- from financial profits to the quality and scope of decision making.” (THWP p.10)

Fortune 500 companies with high percentages of women officers experience, on average, a 35.1% higher Return on equity (ROE) and a 34% higher return to share holders (TRS) than those with low percentages of women corporate officers. (Catalyst, The Bottom Line, p. 2). In an Ernst and Young report cited by The White House Report, researchers found that groups with more diversity performed better than homogenous ones even if the homogeneous groups were more capable. Women’s transformational leadership style “making institutions more transparent, responsive, accountable and ethical- has been found to be more effective in leading modern organizations than men’s transactional” approach”, according to a HBR analysis (TWHP, p.2)

There are conflicting reasons for women’s lack of progress in narrowing the pay gap and reaching top leadership positions in greater numbers. While it is not possible to delve into all the reasons, I

wanted to explore how women's communication, both their mindset and practices, around self-promotion and negotiation may have contributed to the slow progress on pay equality and leadership success.

Moreover, I wanted to examine different strategies that coaches as well as organizations can use to help women overcome some of the challenges associated with self-promotion and negotiation.

In order to better understand women's prevailing communication approach and the challenges they face, it is important to consider the context in which many women have grown up and the mental models and worldview that they have internalized, often without realizing it. Many researchers suggest that "our society still perpetuates rigid gender-based standards for behavior—standards that require women to behave modestly and unselfishly and to avoid promoting their own self-interest." (Babcock p.13)

Babcock argues that there are social forces that "constrain women from promoting their own interests and limit them from getting more when they try." Women are taught from a very young age to focus on the needs of others, before their own needs. These societal assumptions about what is appropriate female behavior "can act as a kind of psychological straitjacket when a women wants to assert her own wishes and desire." (Babcock p. 12)

Related Concepts

Sponsorship vs. mentorship- Women are over mentored and under sponsored. Research shows that men are 50% more likely to have sponsors than women and that sponsorship is highly correlated with career advancement (HBR 2011). Sponsorship, which involves advocacy by senior influencers for an employee's advancement, rather than mentorship, is more effective in women's leadership development. Given women's challenges with self-promotion, the fact that sponsors do the talking on behalf of women and take risks on their behalf may be a key reason that sponsorship is more effective. While mentors give advice, sponsors "make things happen" and invest their political capital on behalf of their protégés. Sponsorship helps women advance in their careers and may counteract their reluctance to go for top roles.

(HBR 2011). However, sponsors need to be trained on the “complexities of gender and leadership” so that female aspiring leaders can be authentic to their personality and overcome “double-bind” challenges.

“Double-bind”: According to a 2007 Catalyst report, there is a “double-bind dilemma for women in leadership” caused by gender stereotypes that hinder women’s advancement. “The assertive, authoritative, dominant behaviors that people associate with leadership are frequently deemed less attractive in women.” (HBR Sept 2010) Behavior that is considered appropriately assertive in men can be seen as unpleasantly aggressive in women and can result in women leaders being disliked. However, when women leaders act in ways that conform to gender stereotypes, they are viewed as less competent. (Catalyst 2007, p.8) “The answer is for women to be assertive not aggressive. It’s a matter of degree and is determined by tone, level of voice and attitude.... Some of the cardinal rules to assertive communication include never challenging the leader of the group in public, never embarrassing anyone, and never personally attacking someone.” (Sheppard p.7) This double bind also exists with regard to women’s self-promotion and negotiation, which will be discussed further on.

Minimizing language: Women often undermine their credibility by using minimizing language. A few years ago I met a successful film producer at the opening night of a film festival. When I asked her what her connection was to the film festival she said, “I’m just the producer of one of the documentaries.” At the time, I instinctively chided her for inserting the word “just” into her introduction, encouraging her to take credit for her role. Many women are not aware of how the phrases and words they use “soften their message.” (Sheppard p.18) Using words such as “I think, like, maybe, just” and asking for permission when they speak can detract from the leadership image women need to cultivate. Sheppard suggests that women replace discounting words and phrases with more authoritative, confident words such as:

- “My point is; I have an idea to share; The numbers show; Research indicates; I recently observed; Let’s go forward; I would recommend; My suggestion is; After reviewing the report I believe; My experience suggests.” (Sheppard p.18)

Women & Visioning:

Women received high ratings on their leadership ability in a study by Insead's executive education program, which evaluated thousands of 360 assessments; the exception was that women scored lower on "envisioning" a critical leadership component. It is possible that women might be equally visionary, but more collaborative in forming their vision and in taking credit for their vision. (HBR Jan 2009)

Summary of Major Findings

- Self-promotion is critical for career advancement.
- Men are more comfortable promoting their strengths and accomplishments than women. Sheppard p. 68
- "Women historically have relied on extra high performance and commitment for visibility to their seniors, rather than networking, ingratiation and self-promotion used more by males." Singh p.77
- Professional women's inclination to avoid self-promotion has wide reaching consequences including negotiation of work schedule, salary, high visibility assignments and promotions. Klaus p.16
- There are social costs of self-promotion faced only by women such as being disliked. Janoff-Bulman p.143
- Women's fear of backlash for behaving counter stereotypically may undermine their ability to self-promote or negotiate effectively on their own behalf. Moss-Racusin et al p.186
- Research shows that women are 45% less likely than men to see the benefits of asking for what they want because "they perceive their environment as unchangeable." This mindset results in much lower attempts at negotiation by women than men. Babcock p. 22-23
- A key reason for the persistent gender pay gap is that women don't negotiate for higher pay. Babcock pages 1 - 9
- Women face a "double bind" when it comes to negotiating on their behalf; they are often viewed as pushy and less likeable when negotiating which can sometimes have negative consequences. NYT
- Women set higher goals and are more successful when negotiating for their peers or their team than when they are negotiating solely on their own behalf. Babcock p. 172
- Successful negotiation strategies can be learned. Research shows that training and coaching women around negotiation can improve outcomes. Babcock pages 156-159
- A 2011 Catalyst survey of 3000 high potential MBA graduates found that communication by women of their achievements was highly effective in helping women advance their careers and increase their compensation.
- Gender differences in impression management may contribute to the differences between men and women regarding professional success as measured by salary, advancement, and leaving the workforce. Singh p. 77

Summary of Major Findings from Newman Survey

My survey of 26 professional men and 53 professional women had some surprising results:

- The majority of men and women only sporadically promoted themselves to others at work.
- More men than women said the biggest barrier to self-promotion “talking about myself didn’t fit my personality.” This was more pronounced for men with over 25 years experience.
- 11% more men said the next biggest barrier to self-promotion was concern about being considered pushy or aggressive. This was more pronounced for men with less than five years experience.

Table 4 – Frequency of Self-Promotion in the Workplace from Communication Survey

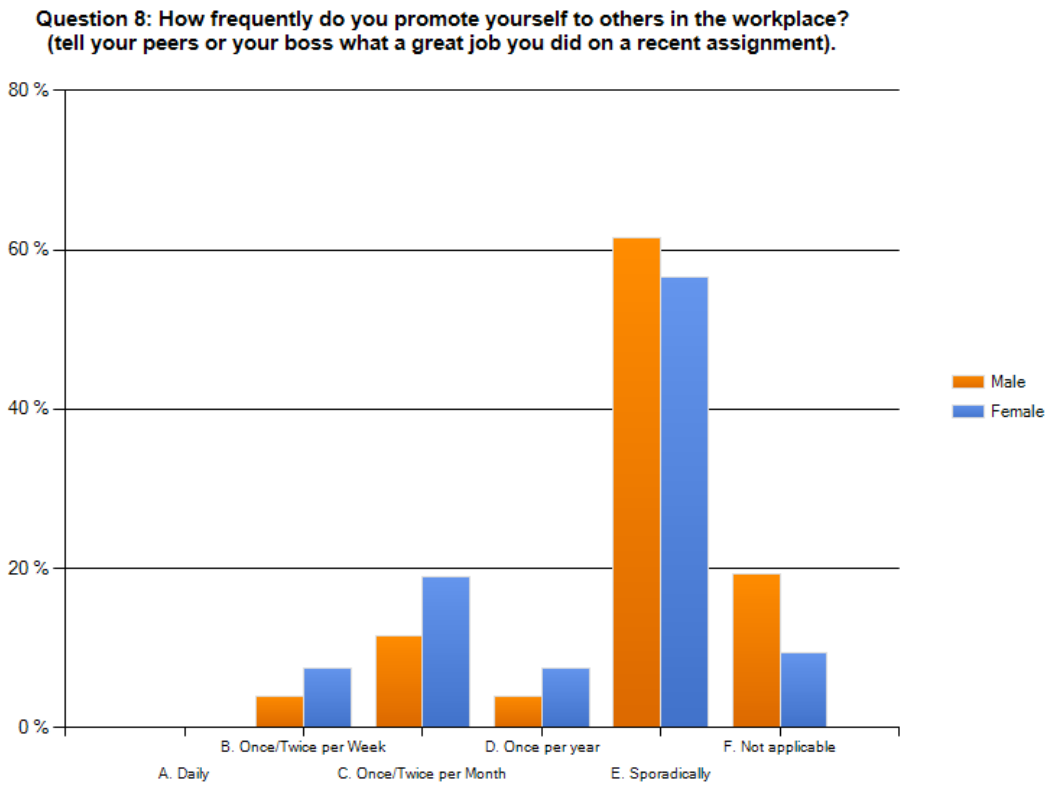
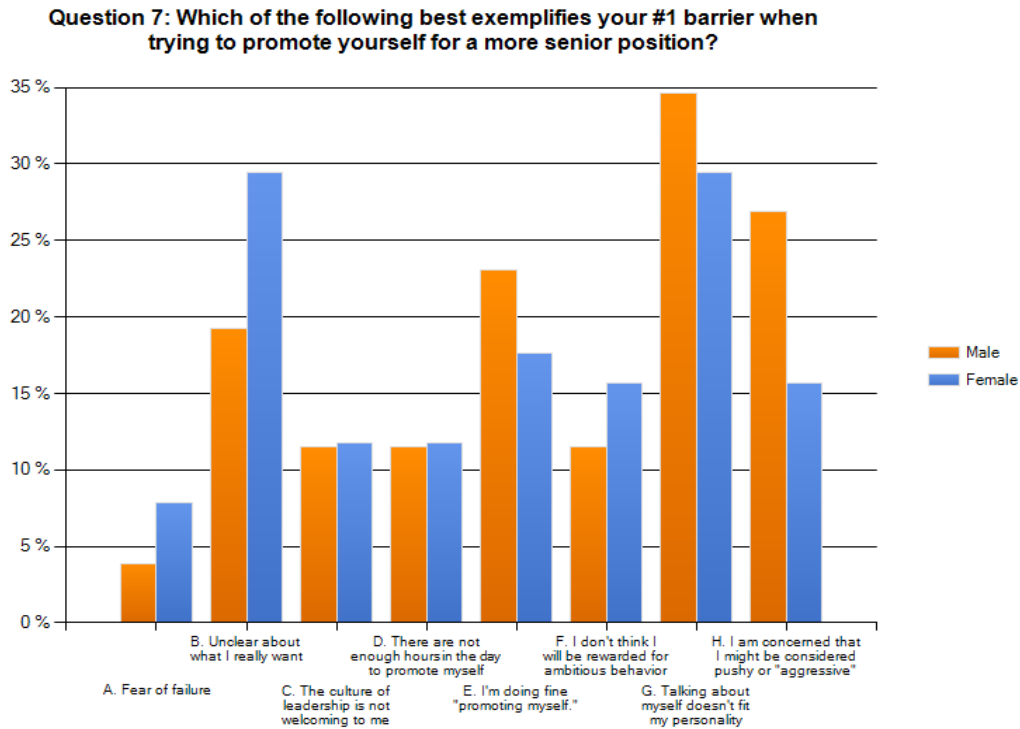


Table 5: #1 Barrier to Self-Promotion in the Workplace based on Communication Survey



My survey also had results that were more in line with current research on women around self-promotion, negotiation, networking and sponsorship:

- More women than men (33% vs. 24%) thought the following statement was fairly applicable, “If I consistently exceed my performance measurements, I will be promoted.” (Based on a response of #4 with a 1 rating being least applicable and 5 being most applicable).
- More men than women (39% vs. 29%) felt that “advancement will depend on my reputation and standing among decision makers which may or may not be based on my actual work.”
- More men (23% vs. 17%) had sponsors, while more women (60% vs. 39%) had mentors.
- While women had more confidence about their negotiation skills in their personal lives, men were more confident that they were effective negotiators toward their own career advancement, with others in the workplace and when performing job related activities. Data is shown below:
 1. More women (49% vs. 39%) were fairly confident that they were “effective negotiators in their personal lives. (#4 rating; 1 being least applicable and 5 being most)
 2. More men (39% vs. 30%) were fairly confident that they were effective negotiators towards their own career advancement based on #4 rating.
 3. More men (60% vs. 43%) were confident that they were effective negotiators with others in the workplace and when performing job related activities (58% vs. 45%) based on #4 rating.

Table 6: Confidence as a Negotiator in your Personal Life

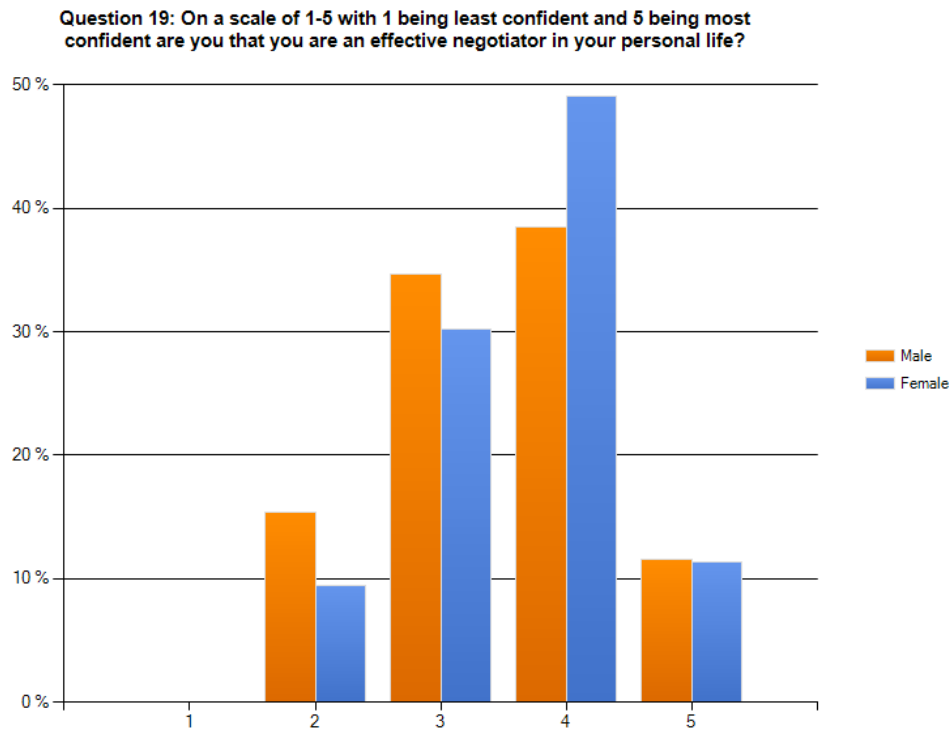
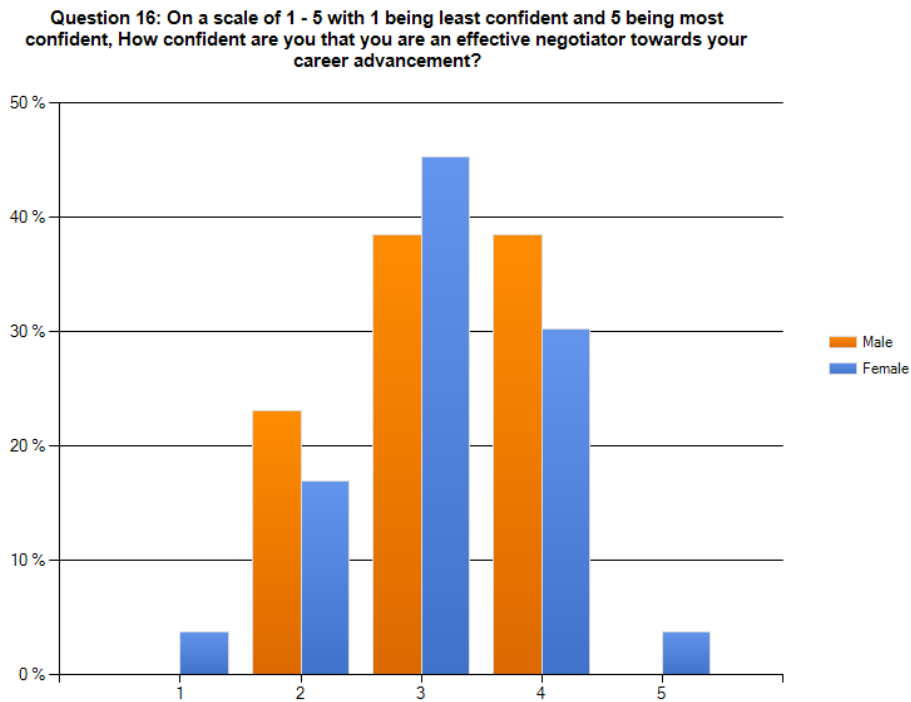


Table 7: Confidence as a Negotiator Towards Your Career Advancement



Self Promotion: Many women falsely believe that a job well done is all that is needed for career advancement. “Women historically have relied on extra high performance and commitment for visibility to their seniors, rather than networking, ingratiation and self-promotion used more by males.” (Singh p.77) While self-promotion is critical for career advancement, data shows that men are more comfortable promoting their strengths and accomplishments than women. Men understand the importance of self-promotion and use it effectively to gain money and power. (Sheppard p. 68) Women executives acknowledge that self-promotion does not come naturally and reject the concept as bragging. Sheppard compares the language of self-promoting to bragging below: (Sheppard p.81)

Bragging

Self-Promotion

I made this deal happen

While leading the team, I was able to bring this deal together

I’ve got the best way to ...

One way that’s worked for me ...

You must try this

I was so happy with the results, you should give it a try

I’m a shoe-in for this promotion

I believe I have all the skills for this new position

They couldn’t have done it without me

I enjoyed having a pivotal role on that

Women don’t see self-promotion ...as something that is directly related to their success.”

(Sheppard p.68) In her book Sheppard references the advice of a Senior Vice President in Investment Banking, “Females need to toot their own horns more. Don’t wait to be asked about what you’re doing. Instead, let people in the organization know about your accomplishments. The Chairman of our company said (that) of all the emails and voice mail messages he gets from employees about deals they closed, problems they solved - 99% of them are from men.” (Sheppard p.68)

More than 60% of women surveyed by The Leader’s Edge said men were better at self-promotion. (Sheppard p.68) Why? One reason is that women are “less confident in their professional abilities even

when their skills were equal to or better than their male colleagues.” (Sheppard p.68) The result of this mind set is that women are hesitant to step forward and apply for a job promotion unless they have 100% of the skills while men would step forward if they had 30% of the job requirements. Men “see promotion as an opportunity to jump forward and figure that they’ll be able to handle whatever the position entails— or get the resources to do so....men just are not as self-critical as women.” (Sheppard p.68-9) “Several studies show that women tend to underrate their achievements, and have less confidence in their abilities than their line managers have for them.” (Singh p.79)

Professional women’s inclination to avoid self-promotion has wide reaching consequences including negotiation of work schedule, salary, high visibility assignments and promotions. (Klaus p.16) Self-promotion has also been shown to enhance people’s perceptions of competence. (Babcock p.97) However, there are negative consequences for women who self-promote, which is not the case for men. “Women experience social and economic penalties (i.e. backlash) for self-promotion, a behavior that violates gender stereotypes yet is necessary for professional success.” (Moss-Racusin p.186) For example, one social cost of self-promotion faced only by women is being disliked. (Janoff-Bulman p.143) Women’s fear of backlash for behaving counter stereotypically may undermine their ability to self-promote or negotiate effectively on their own behalf. (Moss-Racusin et al p.186)

Negotiation: Research shows that women are 45% less likely than men to see the benefits of asking for what they want because “they perceive their environment as unchangeable.” This mindset causes women to engage in negotiation less often than men (Babcock p. 22-23). Several studies suggest women generally expect to be paid less than men for the same work. Since women don’t expect to get results from negotiation and don’t expect to be paid equitably, it is not surprising that a gender pay gap still exists. Women simply don’t negotiate for higher pay at the same rate as men. (Babcock p. 12). According to statistics from Carnegie Mellon, women are only one-quarter as likely to negotiate as men. A 2008 Catalyst survey of over 4,000 full time employed men and women considered high potentials that graduated from top MBA programs for the ten years ending 2007, women are paid \$4,600 less in their

first post MBA jobs and hold lower level management positions than their male peers. (Ibarra, et al 2010, p.3). Women also face a “double bind” when it comes to negotiating on their behalf. Research conducted by Hanna Riley Bowles, a Senior Lecturer at Harvard and others found that “women who negotiate are considered pushy and less likable- and, in some cases, less likely to be offered jobs as a result.” (NYT 2012) Therefore, a woman’s approach to negotiation is crucial. Professor Babcock conducted a study at Carnegie Mellon where men and women asked for raises using identical scripts. While people liked the men’s style, “the women were branded as aggressive—unless they gave a smile while they asked, or appeared warm and friendly. In other words, they conformed to feminine stereotypes.” (NYT 2012)

According to Sheryl Sandberg Facebook’s COO, even if women haven’t studied the data on negative consequences for when they negotiate, they often implicitly understand this, so they hold back. “So, it’s a balancing act. Ask, but ask nicely. Demand, but with a smile, It’s not fair—yet understanding these dynamics can be the key to overcoming them, Ms. Sandberg says.” (NYT 2012) Although negotiation has historically been seen as a competitive exercise, or a battle between adversaries, “negotiation has increasingly been seen as, ideally, a collaborative process aimed at finding the best solutions for everyone involved.” (Babcock ix). Given women’s more collaborative leadership style, this context may make it easier for women to embrace negotiation as a strategy that will benefit themselves and their organizations.

Application and Implication for Coaching Practice

Negotiation: The good news is that negotiation strategies can be learned. Women have demonstrated success in negotiation once they become aware of the importance of negotiation and have received the necessary training or coaching. For instance in 2003 when Linda Babcock first conducted research for her book, “Women Don’t Ask” only 13% of Carnegie Mellon MBA students had negotiated the salary in the jobs they accepted vs. 53% of the male students. “Four years later, after a lengthy book tour and talking relentlessly about these issues on campus, she found that the numbers had flipped: 68% of women negotiated, vs. 65% of the men.” (NYTimes 2012) Ms. Rachel Simmons, the co-founder of the Girls Leadership Institute at Smith and creator of a program that teaches young women assertive

communications skills put it this way, “This is about muscles that need to be developed. This is about practice.” (NYTimes 2012).

Research shows that women’s coaching around negotiation including role- playing, goal setting and “self-management” training produced tangible results. Babcock refers to a study done by professors Stevens, Bavetta and Gist that explores if gender differences in negotiation can be reduced by different types of training interventions. (Babcock p.157) During baseline negotiation training researchers found that women set lower goals than their male counterparts. However, “training in goal setting increased the goals of both men and women and led to improvements in negotiated results.” (Babcock p.158) Unfortunately, gender gaps in performance remained because the women and men increased their goals by roughly the same amount so that the salaries they negotiated rose similarly and the average pay difference between them did not change. However, the “self-management” training program had more dramatic results and incorporates many of the components of the Columbia Coaching Process and Core Coaching Competencies.

The “self-management” training students were taught five “self-management principles”:

1. “Anticipating performance obstacles by **identifying situations** that might cause them anxiety or stress” (Context)
2. **Practicing their responses** with a partner to build self-confidence. (Conduct)
3. **Planning** to overcome those performance obstacles by identifying situations that might cause “anxiety or stress and **developing strategies** to deal with anxiety producing situations. (Content)
4. Setting performance goals by **evaluating all potential outcomes** and **ranking their priorities**, identifying “give aways” and targets as well as minimum they would accept. (Conduct)
5. Monitoring their progress by tracking the goals they attained. Rewarding themselves by **celebrating the goals they achieved**. (Conduct)

The five steps of the self-management training using the CCP model is below:

Table 8 Self-Management Negotiation Process Summary (Babcock, pages 158-159)

Context	Content	Conduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify situations that might cause stress & anxiety • Developmental Frames • Situational Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies to deal with stressful situations • Set performance goals by evaluating potential outcomes & ranking their priorities. • Exploring Options • Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice responses with a partner • Track goals attained • Celebrate the goals you have achieved • Action Strategies • Growth & Renewal • Execution
FOCUS	ALIGNMENT	PERFORMANCE

The self-management training resulted in increased salaries negotiated by both men and women, but were much more significant for the women, and “completely eliminated the gender gap in performance.” (Babcock p.158) A key reason for the improvement in women’s negotiated salaries was that the “self-management” training increased their “feelings of control during the negotiations” and changed their mindset. This was confirmed by measuring the student’s perceived control before and after the training. “As the researchers suspected, the women’s perceived levels of control increased significantly after the training, but the men’s did not (presumably because the men already felt fairly high levels of control before the training).” (Babcock p.158) By changing the women’s feelings of control over the negotiation process, the gender gap in performance was eliminated. The researchers concluded that self-management training could be “extremely effective in improving the agreements negotiated by women who have ...studied basic negotiating tactics but lack the self-confidence and skills to use that knowledge---to translate that knowledge into action.” (Babcock p.158)

Professor Babcock successfully used the self-management approach in a series of workshops she organized with her female PhD students after realizing that they weren't asking for or getting what they wanted enough of the time. Babcock encouraged the women to identify the barriers that were real and those that were imagined. By sharing her research and talking about ways that students could increase their feelings of control over the negotiation process and encouraging them to try out the ideas in their daily lives the students saw dramatic results at work and in their personal lives. (Babcock p.159-160) By changing their mind set and challenging their prior assumptions Babcock's students "were able to open up opportunities for themselves, negotiate better salaries and benefit packages, and overcome barriers that previously would have stopped them....they continue to identify desirable improvements and ask for things they haven't been offered. They don't always get all they want, but they don't give up too easily and rarely fail to improve their lot...They feel comfortable and confident exerting far more control over their lives and careers." (Babcock p.160-161)

The self-management training lends itself to coaching because the approach incorporates the guiding principles of the Columbia Coaching Program. The coach supports the client in their self-discovery process, but success is based on the client changing their mindset, exploring their options and associated benefits and risks, setting goals, experimenting with negotiations, celebrating success and learning from experience. Through coaching the client can explore their mental models and clarify their relationship to self and others. They can also leverage diversity by identifying how their perspective may have been shaped by subtle gender stereotyping messages. The coach can play an important role in partnering with clients to ask objective, reflective, interpretive and decisional questions about their fears of negotiation, their worldview, their goals and outcomes. Ultimately the client is the agent of change. Self-management training creates opportunities for the client to reframe their view of negotiation and their perceived level of control. Self-management training challenges women's fear of negotiation and provides them with a framework that translates knowledge into action the ultimate purpose of coaching. (Babcock p.159)

Self-promotion: As referenced earlier, a 2011 Catalyst study, “The Myth of the Ideal Worker: Does Doing All the Right Things Really Get Women Ahead?” studied 3,000 high potential MBA graduates and found that doing all the “right things” such as requesting high profile assignments, asking for promotions and raises did not significantly help women advance their careers. “Women benefited the most by making their achievements known--- by ensuring their manager was aware of their accomplishments, seeking feedback and credit as appropriate, and asking for a promotion when they felt it was deserved.” Self – promotion was the most effective way for women to advance their careers and increase their compensation. (Marcus 2012, Catalyst 2011)

Marcus, an executive coach and self-promotion expert, provides three tips to help clients change their mindset and overcome fears about promoting themselves.

1. Keep a success journal and record all of your accomplishments. “Review them weekly and create positive affirmations about your value to recite each day.”

2. Since self-promotion can make you feel uncomfortable, stop the negative inner voice associated with these feelings, “hit the delete button and review your positive affirmations.”

Overtime this strategy will help you become aware of “how your negative thoughts sabotage your efforts, (and) you will find it easier to ignore them.”

3. In order to avoid a rehearsed self –promotion speech that may sound fake or feel awkward, Marcus recommends that clients “engage others in conversation and incorporate what you want to say about yourself into the discussion. Writing out the value of your product and service and benefits you provide will help you communicate effectively without feeling rehearsed.” (Marcus, 2013)

By coaching the client to focus on achievements and success, she can discover opportunities for ongoing learning, celebrate her success and gain strategic insight. Once a client acknowledges her skills and accomplishments she is in a better position to begin discussing her successes. Self-promotion is vital for women in leadership roles because it increases the perception of their competence by senior influencers and it benefits their colleagues and direct reports who become recognized as part of a winning

team. (Sheppard p.72)

In her blog, “Mastering The Art of Authentic Confident Self-Promotion,” Marcus reviews three steps clients can follow to develop their self-promotion strategy:

1. “Identify your Value Proposition” (CONTEXT)

“This is the foundation of authentic self-promotion and gives you the confidence you need to talk about yourself in a positive manner.”

- What are your strengths? (Objective & Reflective)
- How have they helped you in the past and in your current job? (Reflective)
- “What are your accomplishments? What do these say about you?” (Objective & Interpretive)

These are open-ended questions that can be used when coaching clients. During this step the client is learning for perspective. During Step 1 it is helpful to also ask questions to determine the client’s limitations as well as strengths.

2. “Communicate Your Value” (CONTENT & CONDUCT)

“Create your personal value proposition or value statement so that you can clearly articulate your value to others.” Use benefit language.

- In other words, what do you bring to the table and how does it benefit your company, your clients, your colleagues? (Reflective)
- Be succinct and conversational.
- Take credit for your accomplishments; speak about business outcomes.

An action strategy can be for the client to practice articulating their value statement through role-playing, in their daily life or through recording and listening to their value statement.

- Identify your “web of influence or power network” inside and outside your organization in order to expand and leverage your network.
- Build and leverage these relationships.

This can be part of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Aggressive, Results Oriented, Time Bound)

GOALS plan. During this phase the client is learning for knowledge. They are engaging in self-feedback.

They can also ask for feedback from colleagues and friends.

3. “Demonstrate Your Value” (CONDUCT)

“Once you acknowledge your value, you can demonstrate it to others to gain

credibility and visibility.

- Volunteer and take on high profile projects at work or in your industry or community enabling you to showcase your leadership and teamwork ability.
- Speak up in meetings and let your opinion be known.
- Take credit for your accomplishments; use assertive communication.
- Submit articles to become a subject matter expert”.

These possible strategies and activities can be part of their action plan and will involve the client trying on new behaviors and perspectives in order to learn from performance.

Peggy Klaus, the author of BRAG! How to Toot Your Own Horn without Blowing It, created

The Take 12 Self-Evaluation Questionnaire for Professionals that I have included below.

The Take 12 Questionnaire can be found www.bragbetter.com and can be used as a free coaching

tool for clients who struggle with self-promotion. The Take 12 “is an inventory of the

things you are most proud of having accomplished in your personal and professional life.” The

information gleaned from answering the inventory can act as the foundation for a client’s

bragging or self- promotion campaign. By answering these questions women will be reminded of

their successes and accomplishments. Klaus states, “you will also see how these fragments can come

together in catchy stories to help you get the promotion or recognition you are seeking.” (Klaus, p.25)

She also suggests that clients try to solicit feedback from others to help them identify their own strengths.

Feedback is a key component of Phase II (Content) in the Columbia Coaching Process.

BRAG! “Take-12” Self-Evaluation Questionnaire for Professionals

1. What would you and others say are five of your personality pluses?
2. What are the ten most interesting things you have done or that have happened to you?
3. What do you do for a living and how did you end up doing it?
4. What do you like/love about your current job/career?
5. How does your job/career use your skills and talents, and what projects are you working on right now that best showcase them?
6. What career successes are you most proud of having accomplished (from current position and past jobs)?
7. What new skills have you learned in the last year?
8. What obstacles have you overcome to get where you are today, both professionally and personally, and what essential lessons have you learned from some of your mistakes?
9. What training/education have you completed and what did you gain from those experiences?

10. What professional organizations are you associated with and in what ways member, board, treasurer, or the like?
11. How do you spend your time outside of work, including hobbies, interests, sports, family, and volunteer activities?
12. In what ways are you making a difference in people's lives?

It is important when coaching clients around self-promotion that they spend time on Phase I components: Developmental Frames and Situational Analysis. A female client's relationship to self and others has likely been shaped by subtle gender messages that she received from a young age and has internalized such as the importance of humility and selflessness. Moreover, situational analysis and leveraging diversity can help women determine how, when, where and to whom to promote themselves which "requires political savvy or a sensitivity to culture and people involved". (Marcus, January 2013) Marcus emphasizes the importance of understanding your organization's culture when deciding how best to engage in self-promotion.

In Chapter 4 of Sheppard's book entitled, *Stop Playing Along and Start Playing to Win*, she discusses how women can navigate corporate politics, which is necessary for career advancement but often makes women feel uncomfortable. "It represents the ultimate in putting one's own interests first, at the expense of others and breaches for many women, a basic code of conduct." (Sheppard p.91) Research shows that women are more comfortable working collaboratively and are more depoliticized. Being politically savvy can leverage women's diversity because "when executed correctly, political savvy is not about backstabbing and lying but, in fact, relies on being collaborative, sharing information and doing what's right for the organization." (Sheppard p.91) Women need to be politically astute in order "to get good ideas adopted, affect organizational change, become recognized and be promoted. Being politically savvy is really about building alliances to get things done." (Sheppard p.92)

Sheppard provides many coaching tools that women can use to build their communication skills including self- assessments on communication style, self-promotion, political savvy and networking. Worksheets that clients can use to develop their self-promotion skills and strategically cultivate or expand their network are also included and can be used as part of a development plan for professional women (and men) when working with a coach. While the books I read on women's communication and leadership coaching were written by women, Leimon believes that "coaching women is not reserved for women coaches: men can bring unique insight into how the game is played in a corporate context." However, Leimon recommends "supervision or an exchange of perspectives with coaches of the other sex". (Leimon, Kindle Location 171)

Conclusions

Self-promotion and negotiation are important skills for career advancement that need to be cultivated in women and also in some men. Women have the ability to develop these skills, but it will require coaching to change their mind set and practice to learn these new skills. Historically leadership development coaching has targeted senior women executives. However, coaching women during different phases of their careers, particularly once they attain middle management positions, can help companies reduce attrition rates and build the leadership pipeline during this critical phase when many women get disenchanted with their lack of progress and either switch jobs, leave the workforce or start their own businesses. Not only can coaching support women to change their mindset and enhance their communication skills, but it can also help them focus on career planning, cultivating sponsors, and articulating their vision, all critical for their leadership development.

It is also important for organizations and male leaders to receive training in how gender stereotyping may be inhibiting women from advancement. Organizations need to be aware that by judging women leaders according to male traits, while discounting the benefits of women's more collaborative approach to

leadership, they are losing talented professionals that could play a key role in helping them achieve their goals. Organizations can offer training to male executives to heighten their awareness of the “double-binds” that women face and to change their mind-set about what behaviors constitute effective leadership. Companies might also consider offering more formal training and forums for women to cultivate sponsors within their organizations since sponsorship plays an important role in career advancement.

There is ongoing debate about what role organizations should play in trying to narrow the gender pay gap. While negotiation training has been successful in women’s negotiation outcomes, I believe that organizations need to be more willing to offer equitable pay for comparable work even if women don’t negotiate as aggressively as men. By taking responsibility for ensuring equitable treatment of their employees, companies can create an environment that is more in keeping with the spirit of the Equal Pay Act. They can also train hiring managers about best practices to minimize pay discrimination. Since businesses are very focused on bottom line results, sharing information about the financial case for increasing women’s leadership (i.e. higher ROEs, improved share holder return) with business heads, shareholders and corporate boards may be effective in helping to make the case for Women’s Leadership Training & Coaching.

I want to continue coaching professional women to advance their careers by helping them increase their awareness of their value proposition, recognize the importance of building relationships especially with sponsors, and support them as they practice communicating their value through words and actions. I am interested in continuing to work with emerging women leaders supporting them to take a more active role in managing their careers by changing their mind set and engaging in behaviors at work that will improve their chances of greater success. I also want to get involved in coaching female high school and college students on self-promotion and negotiation so that they can enter the workforce with the skills needed to negotiate better starting salaries and to promote their ambition and achievements as they progress in their careers. I believe that executive coaching for women can play an important role in supporting women to more successfully navigate their careers toward leadership roles. Women will benefit because they will earn more money, more fully leverage their skills and talents and likely be more fulfilled. Corporations

will benefit because they will benefit from the skills that women bring such as collaboration, transformational leadership and risk control, while improving the bottom line results.

A key unanswered question that remains is how strongly does data support positive outcomes for women who are coached on self-promotion? While there have been studies on negotiation training and the positive outcomes associated with coaching, no such studies exist on self-promotion training.

Many executive coaches including Lois Frankel, Molly Dickinson Sheppard and Peggy Klaus provide anecdotal evidence on women benefiting from self-promotion coaching in terms of career progress post coaching. However, there is a need for actual studies that track and measure self-promotion coaching outcomes.

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