

The 10 Best Practices for Advancing Women in Business #1: Self-Promotion

by Lynn Shapiro Snyder

In my last newsletter column, I shared with you the 10 Best Practices for Advancing Women in Business and promised to spotlight each of the Best Practices with more detail in future columns. The first best practice is as follows:

1. Self-promotion is not only appropriate, but expected. Find your style and self-promote.

When was the last time you told someone outside your family that you had achieved a particular milestone in the workplace? Consider the following hypothetical. Does it sound familiar?

This is about two CEOs of equal seniority in an integrated health care delivery system. The system includes a few hospitals, some physician practices, and some ancillary services in a major metropolitan area. One of the executives, Samantha Smith, achieved a successful milestone in the workplace by getting a small rural hospital about one hour from the "mother ship" hospital to become an affiliate of the system. It is the first time the system has been able to penetrate this area. This affiliation was one of the goals of this system's five year strategic plan.

The second executive, Jane Jones, also recently achieved a successful milestone in the workplace by having established a new division within the "mother ship" hospital for conducting clinical trial research for the development of new drugs and devices. This required recruitment of the right personnel, establishment of the right policies and procedures and marketing to manufacturers to develop this new income stream. This new division also was one of the goals of the system's five year strategic plan.

Samantha Smith makes it a point to get on the calendar of her Board's Chairperson for a private lunch. During the lunch, Samantha walks the Chair through how Samantha has achieved this goal. Samantha also asks to present at the upcoming System's Board Retreat so that the board can hear firsthand about this accomplishment.

Jane Jones is very busy actually running the division until she recruits the new person to take over those duties. Jane has been sending written reports to the Board's Chair so that the Chairperson is apprised of Jane's achievements. Jane also is not going to attend the upcoming Board Retreat because, as a result of her recent late nights doing her own job and the new division job, she would prefer to use the weekend to rest.

We would like to publish your ideas and reactions to what you read in EB&E. E-mail us at: ebe@WomenInHealth.com.

What is wrong with this picture? In a later column, we will be focusing on the need to delegate effectively in order to advance in business. In this column, we are focusing on self-promotion. Why are some women reluctant or otherwise not focused on self-promotion in the workplace as to their achievements? Is

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EXECUTIVE WOMEN IN HEALTHCARE

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there something in a woman's upbringing that appears to stifle these statements? Do women think it is "bragging?" Well, we need to get over that!

On the other hand, why are most men comfortable and, to a great extent, strategic in their self-promotion activities? It appears to come to many men so naturally. They appear to understand that businesses are hierarchical and that the personal objective is to climb up the business mountain.

There are many books on this subject. Suffice it to say that each executive in business - male or female - should include in his or her activities the element of self-promotion in order to make sure that personal achievements are recognized by supervisors and by those who govern an organization. Of course, there are offensive and appropriate ways to self-promote in the workplace. You may want to experiment with different ways before you settle on your style.

To Do:

Make a list of three milestones you have achieved in the workplace in the last six months. Articulate in a memo to yourself the following elements: a description of the milestone; a description of the leadership role you played in achieving this milestone; and a description of how this milestone positively affects the success of your organization. Then, go have lunch with your Chairperson!

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Work versus Purpose

By Dorothy (Dolly) Bellhouse

How many times have you thought "I have so much work to do" or "I have to get my work done" or even worse, "I simply don't have time to do all my work?"

It seems there is an endless supply of work to be done. We all keep trying to work harder, faster, smarter. Yet we never get more than limited relief. A colleague once described her situation as "barely keeping my nose above the water, so when the waves come, I'll be in trouble."

As many of us know, there is no silver bullet. We know that change takes time and perseverance. Anyone who has ever begun a new diet and/or fitness regime knows that there is no such thing as a quick, sustainable result. Rather, we need to commit to our new regime and stick with it to get (and keep) the results we desire. In fact, we may stray from our diet or slack off on working out, only to start again. Maintaining good health requires continual commitment. It gets easier over time as we look and feel better and actually change our eating and exercise habits.

So, why do we think about our work and our organizations any differently? Why do we keep searching

for the healthcare organization that has the answers? Why do we think that continuing to do what we do will produce different results going forward? We've all heard the saying "insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." We know we won't lose weight or increase our fitness level by just doing the same thing we're doing now. Over time, we learn to eat differently, to exercise, and to vary our routines in order to make gains. In fact, as those of us who have been at this for a number of years know, our bodies change and so we must continually re-learn how to maintain our weight and fitness levels.

To build organizational "fitness," we have to learn to work differently. What we've been doing has produced the results we have now: budget crunches, variable patient satisfaction, variable employee satisfaction, and gains that are rarely sustained. In fact, those who have logged decades in the field know that some things just keep circling around. How many performance improvement initiatives have you seen? There is certainly value in performance improvement, but if these initiatives get wedged in amongst a host of other priorities, then what's

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changed? What have you learned? How are you managing differently?

How many things have you added to your plate over the past few years? How many have you taken off? We cannot keep adding one initiative after another. For one, we cannot manage it-and for another, our colleagues throughout the organization just wait for the current "flavor of the month" to change again.

So, let's begin to form new habits. Let's begin to learn to work differently. Let's learn to improve our work and our organization's work every day. Start by examining your work in terms of your organization's purpose. In my last column, I said that the reason any healthcare organization exists is to serve patients; to meet patients' needs in a customized fashion. That is the purpose.

How much of your work is about the purpose? Think about it. Do you think or say "I have to get my work done?" Or do you know that by doing the various things you do, you are furthering your organization's purpose; furthering you and your entire organization's ability to meet each patient's needs?

We know that learning to work differently is not for the faint of heart. It's hard to create and sustain a new habit. But I believe that is what we must do. We must learn to work differently. We must learn to do things we currently do not know how to do. We must learn from the work at the point of care.

Go out and follow patients. Observe your organization's systems from the patient's perspective. Document what you see. Drawing pictures to tell the story is often helpful. Why is this patient waiting in radiology? Why can't the nurse find

the medication she needs now for this patient? Why is this patient being held in the PACU today for hours beyond when they were ready and when the bed was ready? Why was another patient's surgery canceled today?

These are all instances of the system not delivering what a patient needs and are great opportunities for you to learn. It's important to learn specifically about each of these events. The reason why a patient waited this morning may be very different than why another patient waited this afternoon or why another may wait tomorrow. You will need to learn from each circumstance. Do not aggregate what you see. You will only know what you saw at that time. Resist the temptation to generalize. Think about this patient's experience now as you are learning from it.

Show staff what you are learning and ask if you have it right. They have pieces of the puzzle that you may not. Remember, you're there to learn. Let staff know that you want them to teach you what they do; that you want to learn from patients as well. Keep it safe for everyone by not leaping to conclusions and by not jumping in to fix anything. Just start learning what is happening at the point of care. That will be the beginning of your new habit, and the start of real change.

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Important Lessons of My First Year

By Ruth W. Brinkley

This is the first in a series of guest columns featuring women who lead hospitals.

When I was offered the position of president and CEO of Memorial Health Care System in June of 2002, I had been serving as interim president for five months and I was employed by Catholic Health Initiatives, Memorial's national organization. At the top of the search committee's list of criteria for a leader was unwavering commitment to the faith-based mission of Memorial to provide excellence in every aspect of patient care. I was honored and humbled that the Board of Directors saw that characteristic in me.

Memorial was in a period of rapid growth with construction projects at both acute care facilities - Memorial Hospital, a 420-bed hospital near downtown Chattanooga, and Memorial North Park Hospital, an 83-bed facility in Hixson, a suburban community north of the Tennessee River. My goals as interim president and CEO had been to be sure the system continued to move forward, and I wanted Memorial's mission and vision as the area's only faith based system to be stronger because of my being there.

Those goals remained important throughout my first year; however, in a beautiful missioning service, the principle

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Important Lessons of My First Year (Continued...)

that was to guide me became clear. I was being called to be attentive to the Lord who is present in each person and each situation. People must be the focus in health care - the people we serve as patients and the people who serve with us. People truly are our most important resource.

In the interim period I found five special groups of people to be valuable resources - Catholic Health Initiatives' national system staff, who guided and supported me at every step; Memorial's Board of Directors, one of the most talented and dedicated

group of professionals I have ever met; the senior leaders at Memorial; our associates; and our medical staff. These people truly love Memorial and the mission it lives out in this community. They advocate for excellence in all areas.

Good to Great

In my first year, to strengthen the emphasis on people, our leadership team began to study and implement the 'good-to-great' philosophy explained by Jim Collins in his book "Good to Great." Mr. Collins found that great leaders first looked at who was on the team, their vision and devotion, and everything else follows.

Using the good-to-great approach, we assembled a dedicated team and implemented focused leadership development programs and initiatives. We built on the team's

strengths and the strong relationships Memorial already had with area physicians. We established a Physician Leadership Council and hired Memorial's first ever Chief Medical Officer.

Having the best people tops our list of Core Strategies as we strive to be the work community of choice in our area. Our Associate Satisfaction scores were among the highest in the Jackson Organization's data base. In 2004, we were recognized as one of the Top Five Best Places to Work in

Tennessee by *tn Business* magazine and in 2005 as one of Solucient's 100 Top Hospitals - rewarding indicators that confirm that we are headed in the right direction.

Every day I learn something new -- beautiful lessons showing me that Memorial's mission is very strong and vibrant, and that our people make the difference.

"Every day I learn something new -- that our people make the difference."

Ruth Brinkley is President and CEO of Memorial Health Care System in Chattanooga, TN.



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