



# Tactics to Comfortably Talk About Your Achievements

To get ahead in your career, it's important to have visibility and an awareness of your accomplishments. If senior leaders and other decision makers do not know who you are or what you're capable of — as shown through what you've already accomplished — they will not consider you for the opportunities that arise. Men tend to be more vocal than women when it comes to discussing accomplishments, and as a result are more likely to stand out.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it's important for you to know how to talk about your achievements.

There are ways to talk about your accomplishments without sounding like you're bragging — a particularly important trait for women. Below are a few ways to sell yourself while still remaining humble.

## Focus on the specifics of your achievements

Many women have difficulty congratulating themselves and giving themselves the credit they deserve. If this is you, you may find it even harder to speak about your achievements with others. To help you, a general rule of thumb is to be specific about what you did in any given situation and to mention your team or others involved where possible.

### Key takeaways



Focus on specific achievements and remember to acknowledge those who helped you.



Express gratitude for your accomplishments and your challenges.



Keep a list of your successes as you achieve them.



For example:

- When discussing your experience or achievements in a particular field, use specifics such as, “Through relentless focus and hard work, I tripled the net income at my firm within the past two years,” or, “I led the team to an ROI of 30% on our overall marketing efforts.”
- Stay away from corporate-like nebulous statements and phrases such as, “one of the leading experts in my field.”
- When talking about what you’ve accomplished during your tenure in your current or previous position, use statements that clearly state the achievement, but also acknowledge those who have helped. Remember, no one at a company does anything alone, so acknowledging this while stressing your accomplishments is a great way to share your achievements.
- Keep it simple by announcing the accomplishment once or twice instead of discussing it several times or for an extended period of time.

## **Speak from gratitude**

People are more receptive to hearing about or even championing your accomplishments when you speak from a place of gratitude.<sup>2</sup> Making statements such as, “The business unit was struggling, but I was given the opportunity to turn it around,” allows you to subtly tout your success. Another example is, “I’m grateful that I have this ability to make sense of numbers and communicate the story to other non-financial leadership. Through this, I have helped the leadership team drive efficiencies that have had a positive impact on the bottom line.”

## **Acknowledge your contributions along with others**

People enjoy hearing about a team’s success. You can utilize this preference by acknowledging your contribution to the team and the team’s achievement. One example is the following, “I staffed the project with new hires and personnel that I mentored. As a team, we then exceeded our target by 50%.” This way, you can speak to your other, softer skill sets — such as talent identification and development — while acknowledging others’ contributions to your success.

## Recognize the effort it took you

Have you noticed that many of the most successful self-help gurus are those who have been through trials and tribulations, and acknowledge that they have? Many of these individuals understand that this focus on their more adverse experiences makes them more relatable. Therefore, by recognizing the effort it took for you to achieve a goal, you also become more relatable. Acknowledging that you've made mistakes but worked through them to achieve the objective is another means of recognizing effort. To help you do this, keep track of all your accomplishments, big and small — particularly

the metrics – in a journal or planner. This will help in building your confidence and preventing you from being dismissive of your accomplishments, while showing how you've navigated the barriers to your achievements.

Knowing how to talk about your achievements and being comfortable doing so are skills that are very important for leaders. The ability to speak about your accomplishments while remaining humble is necessary to increase others' awareness of your capabilities. The more you do this, the more comfortable you'll be in the spotlight. Your enhanced visibility will lead to more career opportunities.

### Steps to consider

- Keep a record detailing the projects you work on so that you can easily look back and better understand your journey as well as more accurately recall your achievements.
- Align the language you use when talking about your accomplishments with the business' goals and values. The words you use will show your understanding of the business and will help you keep your focus on leadership's goals.
- Speak with a business leader to learn what skills and experience is most valued when they look to advance personnel.

## The support you need

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<sup>1</sup>Rachel Bowley, "Women's Equality Day: A Look At Women in the Workplace in 2017," August 28, 2017, <https://blog.linkedin.com/2017/august/28/womens-equality-day-a-look-at-women-in-the-workplace-in-2017>, Accessed 2/8/19.

<sup>2</sup>Amy Morin, "7 Ways to Talk About Your Accomplishments Without Sounding Like a Braggart," January 29, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/amymorin/2017/01/29/7-ways-to-talk-about-your-accomplishments-without-sounding-like-a-braggart/#f95a8876fcc5>, Accessed 2/8/19.

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