

THE BRIGHT SIDE® OF CHANGE

Written by Donna Rae Smith

Super Bowl Thinking: Super Marketing Strategies for Leaders

For many viewers, yesterday's Super Bowl commercials were just as much fun to watch as the game itself (although this year's contest was certainly close enough to make it exciting). According to Forbes, air time costs reached an all-time high this year—\$3.5 million for a 30 second spot.

And that doesn't include the cost of *making* the commercial. Interestingly, not everyone agrees that it's money well spent. This [Forbes](#) article questions whether companies are really getting a return on their investment.



It's a logical consideration: are the resources invested in advertising yielding the intended results? The question is relevant even if you're not responsible for marketing products. Why? Because you are responsible for "advertising" yourself within your organization. In the same way that marketers need to decide where, when, and how best to position and sell a product, career-minded leaders need to consider how best to internally market themselves within their organizations.

Bright Side receives frequent requests to coach and assist senior leaders in how to better position themselves for the future. It's always surprising to me how many bright and talented business leaders neglect to share their career desires in ways that can accelerate their advancement and consequent value-adding contributions within their organization.

Some have experimented with self-promotion that was too self-serving; they alienated themselves by coming off as braggarts prone to grandstanding.

So how do you better showcase yourself, influence upwards, and "advertise" yourself so that decision makers recognize your strategic value for the business?

We advocate the behavior of transparency as a starting point. When people try to hide or mask their intentions it engenders distrust and resistance from others. It is far better to be forthright about your career desires. Be upfront about the contributions you would like to make for the company, and which roles align with your career aspirations. Decision-makers have every reason to help you advance if you're proving your merit and adding value for them and the company. Help them realize that by placing you in the 'best fit' role for you and the company it creates a win-win-win: the organization wins because you contribute in more substantial ways; your mentor or sponsor wins by "discovering" you; and you win by getting an opportunity to capitalize on your strengths and grow in new and different ways.

Two, be clear about how your current work contributes to the company's strategic goals. Make sure that your work is aligned with overall strategy, and be able to make that connection clearly to others.

Three, document what you do. Not isolated tasks, but the larger work that is moving the company in the direction it wants to go. Link and align your work to the higher level business strategies, goals, and vision. Demonstrate that you are a strategic thinker who supports the organization's direction. Prove that you are not just a follower with blinders on, who simply checks boxes for getting work done.

Four, be a team player. Volunteering to work on other teams and projects contributes to your career strategy in many ways: it demonstrates your willingness to collaborate and support business outcomes; it gives you opportunities to lead and learn; and it expands your network of those who know and support you because you have demonstrated your desire to contribute more for the business.

Remember, not all advertising is created equal. Make sure you're getting a return on your personal advertising by calling attention to yourself in ways that show others your strategic and long-lasting value.

The Experiment

1. What are you doing to market yourself in positive ways? Consider the strategies above.
2. What can you begin doing now to best advertise your contributions and create a win – win – win for you, your peers, and your organization?
3. Do you have an “elevator speech”? If not, practice briefly summarizing (less than a minute in length) your background experience, your career desires, and the value you can contribute to the organization in the type of role you are looking for. Share your speech with a trusted mentor. Do they have any thoughts about where roles like this may be present within the organization? Ask if he or she would support you in moving into such a role.

THE CONVERSATION: Share the results of your experiment in the comments below or contact the author directly at donnarae@bright-side.com.

ABOUT DONNA RAE SMITH

Donna Rae Smith is a guest blogger for Smart Business. She has forged a career, enterprise and an applied discipline on the practice of teaching leaders to be masters of change. She is the Founder and CEO of Bright Side, Inc., a transformational change catalyst company with an emphasis on the behavior-side of change. For more than two decades, Donna Rae Smith and the Bright Side team have been recognized as innovators in executing behavioral strategies coalesced with business strategies to accelerate and sustain business results. Bright Side®, The Behavioral Strategy Company, has partnered with over 250 of the world's most influential companies. For more information, please visit www.bright-side.com or contact Donna Rae at donnarae@bright-side.com.