

How to step up your career this year



By Elaine Pofeldt, contributor

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(MONEY Magazine) -- Tired of waiting for better days to arrive so that you can ask for a bump up? Maybe it's time to quit being so patient.

In this economy, employers won't be handing out new titles left and right, "but the great news is you can still earn a promotion by demonstrably moving your company toward strategic and financial wins," says Stefanie Smith, principal of New York executive coaching firm Stratex Consulting.

The higher you are on the ladder, the more responsibility you have to take for your progression. This plan can help you prove yourself promotion-worthy within the next six months.

Arrange a meeting with your boss to make sure he or she is aware of your ambition. "If you don't tell people you want to take on more responsibility, how are they going to know?" notes New York City career coach Roy Cohen, author of "The Wall Street Professional's Survival Guide."

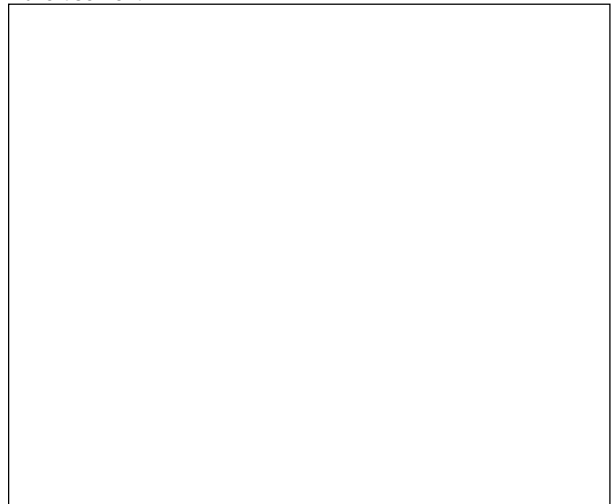
But "rather than focus on your aspirations, frame everything in terms of what your boss wants to accomplish," advises Smith.

Ask what his or her key goals for the year are, and make it clear you want to help achieve them. And, of course, find out if there are any gaps in your résumé. End the meeting by requesting performance feedback every month or two.

Over the next few months, step up to lead existing projects --or present new ideas --relating to the objectives your supervisor laid out. Initiatives that lead to revenue generation or cost savings present the best promise for promotion in any economy, advises Cohen.

But also capitalize on your unique

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knowledge: If your industry faces potential regulatory challenges, for example, and you know that area inside out, be the first to devise a plan to help the company succeed in a changed environment.

Meanwhile, cultivate relationships in other departments -- and collaborate with your new contacts -- as it will expand your sphere of influence, advises Caroline Ceniza-Levine, a partner in N.Y.C. career coaching firm SixFigureStart.

Send periodic reports to your manager highlighting how you're moving the needle. "When it's time for your review," says Smith, "your boss will look through those updates."

Also, publicize the victories of your direct reports, as this publicizes your own victories, adds Paul Copcutt of Square Peg Solution, an Ontario personal-branding firm. One of his clients created a local-server blog so that her group could report progress to higher-ups, for example.

Finally, ask colleagues who are happy with your work to e-mail your manager, says Ceniza-Levine. That way your boss will feel even better about giving you a boost.

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