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The One Sentence You Need to Tell Your Boss, and Yourself

If you want to be viewed as a valuable, contributing member of your organization, you need have the words to articulate your value.



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IMAGE: Getty Images

Often when I work with executives and business owners, they complain that they feel underappreciated for the hard work that they do. They may have received feedback that they're valued in the past, and they may feel accomplished. But they don't always feel like others recognize their worth to the company.

If that sounds familiar, you may be tempted to blame the people around you. Why can't they see how hard you work? Why don't they appreciate how much you contribute to the organization? Well, the answer may be that you haven't taken the step to tell them.

If you want to be viewed as a valuable, contributing member of your organization, you need have the words to articulate your value. If you can't explain your value to others, they may have a hard time identifying the value themselves.

An easy way to do that is with a simple strategy I call your *Concrete Measurable Result*. Knowing your Concrete Measurable Result helps you quantify what they bring to the table. Your Concrete Measurable Result is a single-sentence statement of value that illustrates the results of your efforts.

For example, one might say: "This year, as a result of my marketing efforts, I added \$50,000 in new sales of products to our bottom line."

Or: "As a result of my business developments and networking efforts, I added three big new clients to our clientele this year, who are collectively worth \$300,000."

Or: "As a result of my efforts to improve efficiency, I minimized time-wasting activities across my team and department, and we calculated that we saved 20 percent of our time, which we reallocated to strategic activities, including one project that was worth \$3 million to a client."

All of these are examples of Concrete Measurable Results in which individuals have quantified their efforts to show their value.

There are three main parts to creating a statement of Concrete Measurable Results:

Part One: Describe your effort. Put your finger on what exactly your effort was to create the result. Did you hire a new team and get them on board? Did you put in extra hours to polish a piece of work? Did you come up with a brilliant new idea that's now paying off? This piece is critical, because it helps *you* to understand where your efforts are making a difference, and thus helps *others* to see it, too.

Part Two: Describe the result. Say: "As a result of my efforts, I accomplished 'x.'" Look for something that wouldn't have happened otherwise. For example, if you hadn't personally studied the map of the production floor, the company wouldn't have generated a productive re-design. Or if you hadn't improved your qualifying technique for customers, your company would have wasted a lot of time and money on ineffective advertising. This is the part where you list the result, showing the meaning for someone else and the company as a whole.

Part Three: Quantifying the result. If you really want to drive home your value--for your company and for yourself--try putting some hard numbers to the results. Here you're looking for dollar figures, or a percentage increase or decrease. This is where the results become concrete and measurable. Now that you have this information you can use it in the following three ways:

- You can write the statement ahead of time, identifying the concrete result you hope to achieve at the beginning of the year to set a goal.
- Another way is to use the statement as a reflection, evaluating at the end of a project whether it was worth it, or where your time is best spent going forward.
- Last, your Concrete Measurable Result tells you what you need to be communicating to others. Don't make people guess at your impact; let them know about it. If you feel like you're working very hard but you're not sure you're getting the result, it might be because you're not making yourself aware of how valuable you really are--being able to identify your worth in just a sentence or two helps you know that and communicate that to others.

Now, we should note that Concrete Measurable Results are not about bragging or puffing yourself up. They're certainly not about taking credit where it's not due or overshadowing others. Rather, your Concrete Measurable Results are simply a measure you can take to see where you're having the biggest impact on your company--and to help others see it, too.

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