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COLUMNIST

3 Ways See Yourself Bigger--And Help Others See It, Too

By being proactive in these ways, not only will you be seen as "bigger," you'll actually become the next-level leader you want to be.



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You've accomplished a lot in your career, you're eager to move to the next level - but how do you get your colleagues and superiors to see you in your new role as a leader when they still see you in your old role?

For example, you want to be seen as strategic and visionary, but others see you as someone they can rely on to "get things done." Or, you want to be involved early in important conversations, but others pull you in on an "as needed basis."

So how do you get other people to shift their perspective of you, to see you as the leader you want to be?

Many leaders struggle to change others' perceptions of them simply because they don't realize they can influence the way they are seen. Here are three ways you can get others to see you as the leader you are:

See yourself bigger. Don't let your own self-doubt hold you back. If your self-perception needs a boost, spend time with your strengths. Remember what it is you do especially well and what you want to do more of.

Step into bigger shoes. In several companies where I coach and speak, the way to get promoted is to act the part of a position for six months before you get the title. If you can prove yourself to be an effective leader at that next level by doing the things next-level-leaders do, then and only then will you be eligible for the actual post. Hold yourself to this standard and play the part of the role you want, whether that means contributing in new ways, speaking up with more courage and conviction, or sharing innovative ideas.

Tell others how you want them to view you. It sounds like this: "I've been a salesperson in this organization for a long time, but I'd like to take on more of a leadership role." Follow it up with requests to get involved in higher-level activities, or share your ambitions so others can help pave the way.

By being proactive in these ways, not only will you be seen as "bigger," you'll actually become the next-level leader you want to be. Take a moment to imagine if your colleagues and superiors viewed you in your new role. You would be able to elevate yourself into the kind of position and reputation you want to have, as someone essential to the leadership team who can help drive the direction of the company or lead a project to a successful outcome. You would be having fun, contributing and engaging with others - instead of striving and driving so hard every day to just get yourself noticed.

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