

## **HOW TO BUILD A REPUTATION AND EARN A PROMOTION**

If you are interested in promoting into management it is critical that you build and maintain a good reputation. The creation of a reputation starts from the day you are hired and continues through each phase of the promotional process. I am breaking down the promotional process into the following three phases: prior to the oral interview, during the actual interview, and after the interview and after a selection has been made for a managerial position that you interviewed. How you conduct yourself and the reputation you build during each phase is vital to your success as a managerial candidate. During each of these phases you are being evaluated on your current job performance and potential for promotion into the managerial ranks. You should consider that these daily evaluations are part of the interview process. Most of us think that our only interview is before the oral test panel or when we interview for a promotion in an office, however, we are being evaluated or interviewed each and every day by our supervisor. This evaluation or interview is not only on our job performance but also on our potential for promotion. I will discuss with you how to earn a good reputation, what your supervisor is looking for in a manager, and how to conduct yourself during each of the three phases of promotion.

There are many ways to properly prepare for a promotion. In order to make yourself a viable candidate you must spend a lot of your own time and effort in study, and you must make a diligent effort to build a good reputation. The more effort expended the greater chance of promoting.

The following are the three phases of promotion and how to build a good reputation during each of the phases:

1. Prior to the written and oral test.
2. During the written and oral test.
3. After the interview and after the selection has been made for the position you interviewed.

I'm going to briefly summarize these three areas and the importance of each phase in achieving your goals.

### ***1. Prior To The Written And Oral Test.***

The first phase of promotion starts on the day you are hired and continues after you have learned your position. Each day on the job you are building two personal files, one that is formal and one that is informal. In your formal file is all the written documentation on your job performance. This documentation is used to substantiate performance reviews, salary raises and promotions. Your objective is to develop into an outstanding employee and to be acknowledged with as many positive comments as possible in this file. Your informal file is your reputation. What is your reputation? It is what people actually think about you. It is what is said about you behind your back. Your reputation can make or

break you. You want a good reputation. And you want both the formal and informal files to agree.

Who evaluates your job performance? Your supervisors and managers evaluate you. Additionally, you are evaluated by your peers and by the public we serve. The evaluation is constant and on going. Your supervisor will evaluate your job performance as a technician and your potential to be a managerial candidate. You will continue to be evaluated after you promote for the rest of your career. Your supervisor will prepare your formal file. And your supervisor will discuss your reputation with his or her managers. You are creating a reputation that is unique to your talents and abilities. In order to develop a good reputation you should consider that what you do daily is part of the interview process. This ongoing interview is for all future promotions. Your score on the actual interview is based on how you answer the interview questions. Your reputation score is based on both what you say and actually do on the job.

What is a manager looking for in a candidate who has the potential to promote into management? Managers are looking for someone who is a hard worker and who has the following characteristics: dependability, punctuality, professionalism, sobriety, courtesy, leadership, ability to work effectively without supervision, and the ability to make sound decisions on your own. And this is very important – the ability to get along with your superiors, co-workers, and the public, and the ability to be a team player.

You may think that it is difficult to know what a manager is looking for if you have never been a manager, however, if you try to see things through a manager's eyes you may be surprised how much you already think and see things like a manager. As a front line employee don't you want your co-workers to be dependable and punctual? Don't you want your co-workers to be hard workers? Don't you want your co-workers to be professional? Don't you want co-workers that you can get along with? Don't you want your co-workers to be part of the team? And don't you want managers with these attributes?

If you know what your manager is looking for it should be easier to prepare for your promotion.

There are many things that will prevent a manager from seeing your potential and that will contribute to the demeaning of your reputation. The following are some of the characteristics that a manager does not want to see in his or her employees: whining, complaining, backstabbing, rebellion, laziness, apathy, indifference, cynicism, sarcasm and ignorance. What is the meaning of these words? We are all part of a team and are working together for a common goal, that is, to give the best possible service to the public. If you are someone who is inclined to always complain and whine, who always finds fault with policy and procedure, who always looks for something wrong, who is always cynical and sarcastic, who blames everyone else for anything that is wrong, who is the king or queen of negativity, who is never satisfied, who only puts out just enough to get by or who is lazy, who likes to embarrass or criticize your superiors (or peers) in front of others, and who expects someone else to do the work for them do not expect a

promotion. Your supervisor will not want to promote you nor will your supervisor recommend you for a promotion. If you have any or all of these characteristics you are someone who is not ready for a promotion. If you have these characteristics you should not be a manager because a manager can influence a lot of people, for good or bad, and these characteristics if carried into the management ranks will create a negative and hostile environment in your office. If you are so unhappy and miserable with your job you should consider looking for a new job and career. If you think there is no hope for improving the system, that no one knows what he or she are doing, and that you are better than everyone else you should consider a new career. You should consider either opening your own business or pursuing a new line of work. This job is not for you. The DMV is not your niche. However, if you sincerely think that the system can be improved then make a difference and become a manager. As a manager you can make a difference. You can help make a better work place. If this is the job you want to make your career then work on developing skills that are marketable. If this is the job that you want to make your career then find ways of getting along with everyone and working within the system, rather than against the system. If this is the job that will be your career find out what it takes to be successful and what the department expects of you as an employee. If this is to be your career make the best of it and do what you can to make a difference and improve the work place. It should be your goal and your mission to make the work place better. It should be your responsibility.

In conclusion during the first phase of promotion you are developing not only your skills and knowledge as a DMV employee but you are developing your reputation as a potential manager. When you are ready for a promotion your reputation will be discussed between managers in different offices. If you do not have a good reputation all the skills and knowledge you have developed will not help you in promoting. If you do not have a good reputation you may be prevented from going anywhere. If you have a good reputation and have developed your skills and knowledge your chances for promoting are great. Your reputation can carry you very far. If you have a good reputation managers will be lining up to hire you. It can carry you to the upper echelons of management. Your potential will be limitless.

## ***2. During The Written And Oral Test***

I will not spend too much time talking about the written test because there can several different types of written tests that are administered. However, one piece of advice that I can offer is that you should answer the questions as if you were already in the position for which you are applying. For example, if you are applying for the position of Manager I answer the questions as if you are a Manager I, not as a MVFR or LRE. Try and look through the eyes of a Manager I and assume that you are a Manager I. Broaden your perspective beyond your current position. If you are a Manager I and are applying for a Manager II or Manager III position then you should answer the questions as if you are a Manager II or Manager III.

During the oral test avoid as much as possible verbatim quotes of policy and procedure. Do not give generic answers. Rather answer the questions in a conversational manner, as

if you were talking to an employee or a customer. It is not what you memorized but what you understand. It is your thinking and problem solving ability that the oral panel is looking for. The panel already knows what is said in the manual. The panel already knows department policy and procedure. The panel wants to see if you can explain these answers in an understandable and clear manner as if you were talking to someone who is not cognizant of the subject.

If you are asked how to handle an employee with a disciplinary problem talk to the panel members as if one of them is the employee who is the problem. When you are in the interview room try to picture yourself talking to the employee, and telling the panel members what you would tell the employee. And if you have personal knowledge of a situation that is raised during the interview state that you have seen or done this and elaborate how you would handle it.

How will a good reputation help you doing the interview? By cultivating a good reputation you build your confidence. You are confident in your self and in your job performance. You know what the department expects. This confidence will come across in the interview. You should score very well on the interview.

### ***3. After The Interview and After The Selection Has Been Made For The Position You Interviewed***

The results have been sent to you and you have been placed on the promotional list. Now you are waiting to get a feeler for the opportunity to interview for a position. Do not interview for a position unless you really want it. Do not interview just for the experience. If you interview for a position that you do not want and you get the position what are you going to do? You better take it. If you turn down a position after you were informed that you had been selected you will reduce your chances of future promotions. The hiring process is long and involved. A bad impression will be created and hard to forget if you change your mind. You will hurt your reputation. If you want a position, if you are really interested in the position put in for it. Don't be dissuaded from applying because you are told that someone is a "slam dunk" for the position. Don't be persuaded or influenced by gossip or speculation that it has already been decided who will get the promotion. You do not hear this speculation from whoever is making the final decision on hiring. First of all it is illegal to select the candidate for the position before the interview. And secondly most selections are based on the interview and the input the hiring manager gets from your supervisor. This area is where your reputation is important.

It is announced that the position has been filled. If you get the position you will report to your new office as a manager. Congratulations.

If you do not get the position don't be discouraged. Instead objectively look at why someone else was selected. Could you have conducted your interview better? What can you do to improve on future interviews? Did you have the same qualifications as the selected candidate? Is the person who was selected more qualified than you? Do you

need to improve your reputation? If you think that there is room for improvement and you think that you need more experience than do what you have to do to get the experience. Learning is a continuous and ongoing process. It never stops once you reach your goal. In fact, once you reach your first goal, the first promotion, you will have a considerably more to learn. On the other hand you may have been perfectly qualified for the position, however, the hiring manager may have hired someone who had a skill that you did not possess. After all the hiring manager is looking for someone who is not only the best qualified but whom in his or her opinion may be the best fit for the office. The hiring manager is looking for someone who he or she thinks is best fit for them. Do not despair. There will be other promotional opportunities. You still have a job. And you have a good job. You continue building and improving your reputation and prepare for the next interview.

You are now in the management ranks, either a Manager I, II, III, IV or V and you want to promote to the next level. All the steps describe above for promoting are still applicable. Now your reputation is more widespread. You are known in many offices. As a technician you may have only been known in your office. The higher you go the more offices you have probably worked. You know the managers in the adjacent offices. Everything you do has more impact than what you did as a technician. You have a lot more influence than a technician.

How do you enhance your reputation? You do the same things a technician does. You are a team player. You are dependable. You are serious and sober about your position. You get along with your fellow managers. You get along with the boss. You do your job. You do everything you are supposed to do. And more. You go the extra mile everyday. You are a hard worker. You are being interviewed every day. If you realize that your actions, your conduct, your behavior are all part of the interview process you will not only enhance your reputation but will improve your ability to do well on the oral interview. The building of a reputation is an ongoing and never ending process. Many people only remember what was done for them yesterday. Avoid at all costs, complacency. You need to prove yourself every day.

As for being given an unpleasant assignment do it willingly and cheerfully. There is always something that has to be done that no one wants to do. If given such an assignment don't complain, don't whine, just do it. You may turnaround a negative situation, a bad situation into something positive. If you make this impossible situation better, you will make an indelible mark for yourself that is positive and unforgettable. Again this is all part of building a reputation, a positive reputation, and enhancing all chances for future promotions. You are improving your marketability.

You have interviewed for the promotion, either a Manger II, III, IV or V or a Regional Administrator position. The candidate has been selected. You have been notified of the selection. Congratulations, if you are the selected candidate. If you are not selected, what should you do? How should you act? You congratulate the selected candidate.

Yes, you congratulate the selected candidate and offer him or her all your support. This is what you would want someone to do if you got the position. Only one person is selected. Only one of the candidates will be the new manager. But if you are the one who is not selected you are not a loser. You are not the odd person out. You still have your job and you have a good job. You are still a manager and a good manager. It is a difficult job as a hiring manager to make a selection. Most of us who have promoted through the ranks of management have interviewed for positions that we wanted but did not get. This is part of the process. If one of your competitors is selected for a position you interviewed, and now this competitor who was your colleague, now is your boss, what should you do? How should you act? You congratulate the selected candidate, and you give them all your support, now and in the future. After all if you had been selected you would want all your competitors to give you all their support. We're all part of a team. We're all in this together.

What kind of impression will you make if you become disgruntled for not getting the position? What kind of impression will you make if you blame everyone else for not getting the position? What kind of impression will you make if you file law suites, grievances or complaints if you do not get the position? What kind of impression will you make if you are not supportive of the selected candidate and that it is known that you are angry about the system? Your actions will be a self-fulfilling prophecy. By your actions you are broadcasting to everyone that you cannot handle news that is not favorable. By your actions you are broadcasting to everyone that you are not a team player. By your actions you are broadcasting to everyone that the system is not acceptable to you, that you are better than the system. You are burning your bridges and reducing, if not eliminating, the possibility of future promotions.

### ***“Playing Politics” and Closing Comments***

Let me briefly discuss the term, “playing politics.” This term often is a pejorative. This term is often associated with brownnosing and other similar derogatory words. Nothing could be further from the truth. Playing politics is simply one way of describing how to get along with everyone in your working place. Playing politics is showing consideration for the feelings and well being of your co-workers and superiors. Playing politics is being respectful and professional. Playing politics is treating people like you want to be treated. Isn't it smart to get along with your boss? When you are the boss don't you want your subordinates to get along with you? If you want a good reputation it makes perfect sense to play politics and get along with your boss. After all who wants to work with anyone who does not get along with his or her co-workers. And who wants to work with someone who is always complaining about the system but doesn't want to do anything about it.

In closing, the hiring process is continuous, ongoing and never-ending. It involves the creation and maintenance of a good reputation and the ability to get along with everyone with whom you work. You are being interviewed every day for every position, current and future. If you keep these observations in mind, practice and adhere to them, your

chances for promotion, for reaching you dream and goal, and for achieving the prize will be greatly enhanced.

Good luck.

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November 19, 2004