

CareerSmart Advisor™

Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

A Note From Dave

When you spend so much time during a job search to find the best possible career opportunity, you want to be sure that your efforts lead you to a fulfilling long-term position. Due diligence is always recommended — you need to learn about a company to ensure that it's a good (long-lasting) fit for all involved.



At the same time, companies need to perform some due diligence of their own to help them bring the best fitting candidates on board. While there are undoubtedly many happy endings, sometimes both individuals and companies can get it wrong.

Data from a Corporate Executive Board's Recruiting Roundtable survey of more than 8,500 hiring managers and 19,000 of their most recent hires revealed, among other things, that companies often let candidates "tell" what they can do rather than "show" their skills, and they don't provide candidates with enough information about what the job is really like. A surprising 40 percent of new hires said the information they were provided about their new positions was inaccurate.

It's clear that individuals and companies need to work cohesively to make the hiring process a win/win proposition for all involved. As the war for talent only intensifies, there is no room for job description inaccuracies or mistakes in team formation.

If you are a candidate, it is very much in your best interest to step back from the seductiveness of being recruited and make sure that you are doing your own due diligence because if you accept the offer and things don't work out for whatever reason, the time invested is gone forever. To state the obvious, you owe it to yourself.

Sincerely,

Dave

Dave Opton
ExecuNet Founder & CEO
www.execunet.com/davesblog

Asking for a Raise During a Downturn

By Marji McClure

Asking for a raise during even the best of economic circumstances can be one of the toughest undertakings any employee attempts. Making that request during an economic downturn can be even more daunting — and frustrating.

According to a recent survey by consulting firm Hewitt Associates, US-based organizations awarded the lowest salary increases in 2009 since Hewitt began polling companies about pay in 1976.

While the challenge of receiving a raise today is great, it's certainly not impossible. There are several things executives can do to improve their chances of securing a pay increase, and in some cases, alternative forms of recognition. Advanced planning, as part of a solid game plan, is crucial.

Know Your Worth

Before you walk into your boss' office, it's imperative to do your homework and confidently know what your position is truly worth. According to Lee E. Miller, author of *Get More Money on Your Next Job...in Any Economy*, your checklist should include the following:

- What you are worth in the market
- Compensation for similar positions at other companies
- Your own marketability
- Other job opportunities available
- Your company's compensation philosophy

Compensation Expectations When Changing Jobs

	2008	2009
President/CEO/Partner/Chairman	13.6%	9.5%
CxO (Other C-level)/Senior VP	11.5%	6.1%
Vice President	11.3%	4.9%
Director	13.3%	8.5%

Source: ExecuNet's 2009 Executive Job Market Intelligence Report

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Career-Enhancing Programs
September 2009
Hosted by Dave Opton,
founder and CEO, ExecuNet

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9/24 — **Networking Follow-Up: Your Reputation, Results & Relationships** — Kathy McAfee
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September 2009
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9/15 — **Wilmington** — Rick Hays
9/15 — **Houston** — Sharon Anglin
9/15 — **Irvine (Orange County)** — Mark James
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9/15 — **Cleveland** — Rick Taylor
9/16 — **Chicago** — Gail Sussman Miller
9/16 — **Hartford/New Haven** — Paul Mathews
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9/17 — **Louisville** — Thom Crimans & Cathy Fyock
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9/23 — **Toronto** — Martin Buckland
9/23 — **Stamford Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Linda Van Valkenburgh
9/23 — **Denver** — Karen Armon
9/23 — **Philadelphia** — Mitch Wienick & Ed Kelleher
9/24 — **Palo Alto** — Linda Dominguez
9/24 — **Atlanta Sr. Executive Roundtable** — J. Patrick Haly
9/24 — **Columbus** — Janine Moon
9/24 — **St. Louis** — Ken Coleman & Randy Hove
9/24 — **Detroit Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Marge Larsen
9/25 — **White Plains** — Linsey Levine
9/25 — **Rochester** — Arnie Boldt & Gail Smith Boldt

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Insider Insight

Succeeding as the Introverted Leader

By Jennifer B. Kahnweiler, PhD

In today's extroverted business world, introverts can feel ignored, overlooked and misunderstood. In fact, according to my research — a two-and-a-half year national study of introverted professionals — four-out-of-five introverts say extroverts are more likely to get ahead in their workplace. Additionally, more than 40 percent say they would like to change their introverted tendencies, but don't know where or how to begin. The good news? Introversions can be managed.

What is Introversions, Anyway?

Introverts may be less noisy at work, but by all accounts they outnumber extroverts. Even many high-powered executives — a full 40 percent — describe themselves as introverts, including Microsoft's Bill Gates and über-investor Warren Buffett. Odds are, President Obama is an introvert as well. But what is introversions, anyway?

Unlike shyness, a product of anxiety or fear in social settings, introversions is a key part of personality — a hard-wired orientation — and may be best defined by several characteristic behaviors, including the need to spend time alone, process information internally, and “think first, talk later.” Introverts also seek depth over breadth, prefer writing to talking, and avoid showing emotion.

The Hard Realities

“It's not easy being green,” laments Muppet Kermit the Frog. The same goes for being introverted in an extroverted business culture. Introverted professionals face a number of hard realities. Among them:

People exhaustion. Introverts can experience an assortment of ailments at work — headaches, backaches, stomachaches and more — yet feel fine off the job. This mind/body response to

stress can result from a wide range of factors. The chief culprit: people exhaustion.

Underselling. Introverts typically stay mum about their accomplishments — seeming to abide by the old Southern adage, “Don't brag on yourself.” Yet today, careers are made or broken by what others know about a person's skills and potential. Introverts miss out simply because they don't sell themselves.

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There is no magic bullet for managing your introversions. But in today's noisy business world and workplace, you can learn how to thrive. The goal is not changing your personality or natural work style, but embracing and expanding who you are.

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Failure to “play the game.” Introverts routinely retreat from office politics. Sure, politics can be nasty, but much of the game is natural and necessary. Introverts, with their desire to be low-key, often fail to sniff out important politicking opportunities and wind up watching their extroverted colleagues get ahead.

Onward — and Upward

There is no magic bullet for managing your introversions. But in today's noisy business world and workplace, you can learn how to thrive. The goal is

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Books Worth Your Time: Q&A with Authors Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World

Economic instability is the norm these days, creating some complex challenges to leadership. To successfully meet these escalating demands, business leaders cannot simply rely on what's worked for them in the past. They must evolve their leadership skills. They must adapt.

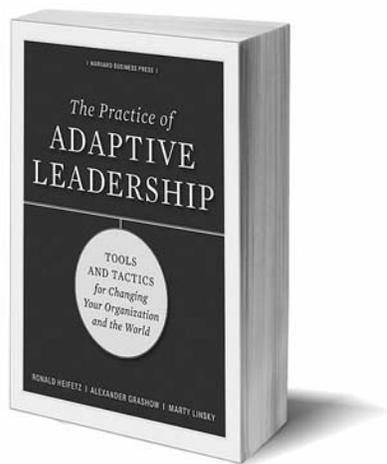
In *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* [Harvard Business Press, 2009], leadership experts Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky create a practical guide to enable executives and organizations to nurture change and growth under challenging circumstances.

The book enables leaders to assess their leadership skills, and provides exercises readers can utilize to develop the portfolio of talents necessary for success in today's turbulent business world. Filled with insightful, thought-provoking stories, depicting the authors' ideas in action, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* continues the work Heifetz first undertook in *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, and then followed with co-author Linsky in *Leadership on the Line*.

In this exclusive ExecuNet interview, ExecuNet Editor Will Flammé asks the authors to share their views on adaptive leadership:

Q. What role does diagnosis have in your system?

A. Diagnosis is critical, both diagnosis of the system and situation you are in, and diagnosis of yourself. In our experience, people tend to leap to action too quickly when a problem appears. There is tremendous pressure in the system to do so, especially for people in authority.



“Don't just stand there, do something!” As a result, we believe that the single biggest mistake people make in trying to exercise leadership is the diagnostic failure of trying to treat adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems.

Diagnosing yourself is just as important as diagnosing the system. Before stepping into a situation, you need to understand your own blind spots and triggers, what role you are playing in the organization, what values you embody and how you are perceived. Whether, when and how to intervene will be a function of how you diagnose both yourself and the situation, a process which will enable you to make conscious choices rather than rely on your defaults.

Q. How does shared language aid in leading adaptive change?

A. In organizations we have worked with, shared language about leadership creates enormous opportunity for more candid conversation, clear communication and effective leadership.

The word “leadership” comes with a lot of assumptions, expectations and baggage. If, for example, an organization

begins to talk about leadership as an activity rather than a person or a position, there is the possibility of creating a culture where people feel an obligation to lead, to address difficult issues, from wherever they sit. We know one very large public sector organization where every employee — every employee — signs a statement upon accepting a job that he or she will take on a responsibility for leadership. That agency is one of the highest performing organizations we have ever encountered.

Q. Why is going beyond the scope of one's authority necessary for adaptive leadership, and how does one accomplish such a feat without undermining himself?

A. If you are a high-performer within your scope of authority, doing very well what you are paid to do, you are doing important and noble work. No organization can survive and thrive unless lots of people are doing what they are paid to do really well. We do not want to denigrate that work. It just has nothing to do with leadership. And organizations often use the leadership label for people doing their jobs really, really well as an incentive to keep them within their scope of authority.

But exercising leadership on adaptive issues requires disturbing the status quo, challenging expectations instead of meeting them. That's what makes it risky and why we see so little of it in organizational life.

Leadership is an experimental and improvisational art; the challenge of exercising leadership is to spend more time than you have in the past dancing on the edge of your scope of authority on behalf of what you are deeply about, and

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Raise

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Chuck Csizmar of Florida-based CMC Compensation Group says that executives should know the salary range of their current position and how their base salary compares to the midpoint. “If you’re below midpoint, you have a stronger case than if you’re already paid above the ‘going rate,’” he says.

Miller says it’s also important to know if your company favors a base salary or a bonus. “If it is a bonus, you might want to focus on an increase in bonus potential or bonus criteria rather than asking for a raise,” he says.

When Should You Ask?

For most companies, salary increases are only given after annual performance reviews, and requests for raises are typically only responded to during such a time. Csizmar stresses the importance of knowing the schedule of your company’s performance review and “how the timing of your request fits — or doesn’t,” he explains. “Ad hoc, out-of-schedule increase requests should be reserved for extraordinary circumstances, because the employee raising the issue is often perceived as a challenge (criticism) to how he or she has been treated by the boss. You don’t want to surprise the boss and put him or her on the defensive.”

It’s important to time raise requests to coincide with increased responsibilities and recent achievements. “Asking for more responsibilities or learning new skills through training are good predicates to asking for a raise,” says Miller. “The best way to set yourself up for a raise is to ask for more responsibilities in an area which the company and your boss value.”

Preparing and Having the Conversation

Well before you even decide you want a raise, it’s important to make a conscious effort to build your case for a salary increase. Experts agree that executives need to be diligent about keeping track of their accomplishments so they can use them as reasons why a raise is well-deserved and appropriate at that particular time.

Expert Resources:

- Chuck Csizmar, CMC Compensation Group (CMCCompensationGroup.com)
- Patricia Lenkov, Agility Executive Search (AgilityExecutiveSearch.com)
- Lee E. Miller (NegotiationPlus.com)
- Pat Schuler, The Gemini Resources Group (GeminiPro.com)
- Dora Vell, Vell Executive Search (Vell.com)
- Brian Walker, The Wise Group (WiseSearchGroup.com)

“I recommend that all clients keep an accomplishments file,” says Pat Schuler, president of The Gemini Resources Group. “The rapid pace of business life today makes it almost impossible to remember last week, much less months ago. My clients are invariably surprised when they look back over the months.” Miller adds that executives shouldn’t just collect accomplishments and hide them in that folder. “The best way to present the accomplishments is not when you go in and ask for a raise, but as they occur,” says Miller. “That way, you are constantly creating a favorable impression, reinforcing the image that you are a high-performer. When you ask for a raise, you simply need to remind them of what they already know.”

When it comes to negotiating a raise, experts agree it’s all about what you bring to the organization. It’s vital to keep the focus solely on your contributions, stresses Csizmar. “Never mention the pay of anyone else,” he cautions. “That will poison the conversation. This is about you, and what is fair for you. Avoid mentioning so-called industry salaries, as they can be easily challenged, and you’ll sound like you’re whining. Instead, focus on what the boss would consider ‘fair,’ considering your demonstrated performance.”

What You Should/Shouldn’t Accept

Before you meet with your boss, make sure you have a clear sense of what you will accept in terms of a salary increase, and what (if anything) you will accept as alternative compensation. “Be clear on what is attractive or important to you,” says Schuler.

Miller says receiving more time off or agreeing to a telecommuting schedule are not smart concessions to accept during a recession. “Out of sight, out of mind,” says Miller. “That actually does make it

more likely you get laid off when there is a cutback.” Miller adds that threatening to leave the company or seeking a counteroffer won’t likely lead to the salary increase you seek.

“Most people leave within a couple of years of taking a counteroffer,” Miller explains. Seventy-two percent of executive recruiters surveyed by ExecuNet earlier this year reported that candidates who accept counteroffers still end up departing in the following 12 to 18 months. “Rather, it is better to simply let an employer know you have an offer, but have decided not to take it because you want to stay with the company. Use the offer to let them know that it pointed out to you that your salary is below market and ask for help in remedying that.”

When You’re Being Asked

If, as an executive, you’re asked for a raise by one of your direct reports, a conversation that reveals the employee’s reasons for the request is required. Ask what is causing any discontent, suggests Csizmar. “Find out if there is a bona fide business reason for this request to determine if the individual is truly being underpaid,” he says. If the employee does, in fact, deserve a raise — which can’t be granted because of economic reasons — Csizmar says an executive should never tell the employee that he or she can’t do anything about it.

“Candor is one of your most effective tools in this negotiation,” says Schuler. “Recognize the employee’s contributions at least verbally. Go out of your way to do this more often than you would in flush times. Some people ask for the raise because they feel the corporate culture uses this as the only measure of value or recognition.”

If a monetary increase isn’t possible, an executive needs to take steps to ensure that the employee is recognized for his

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or her achievements in some way that is satisfactory to that individual. “During tough times, when increases are not being given, it’s critical that management provides some sort of recognition for their high-performers. If there is a legitimate case for someone, the first thing you have to do is recognize the employee’s contributions,” says Csizmar, noting options such as theater tickets, a weekend getaway or additional vacation time. “Do not simply shrug your shoulders and say ‘I can’t,’” says Csizmar.

Csizmar adds that it’s important to make any acts of recognition visible across the organization. He says other employees need to know and recognize that a particular employee is being appreciated.

Still, Csizmar cautions that management shouldn’t promise employees that they will receive salary increases in the future. “Those may prove impossible to grant, which would make your relationship with the employee worse than before,” he says.

Negotiating an Increase in a New Job

Typically, executives (all employees, in fact) will seek a salary increase when they are working to secure a new position. And oftentimes, this can be the perfect time for an executive to seek an amount of compensation not possible through employment with a former company because one’s starting salary at a new company sets the precedent for earnings with that organization.

While executives need to understand the marketplace and their position within it when seeking a raise at their current company, they must have that knowledge (and more) when investigating potentially higher-paying positions at other organizations. According to Brian Walker, president and managing director, life science practice at The Wise Search Group, a Connecticut-based executive search firm, executives need to consider the title of the role, the size of the company, what others in the company are earning (if it’s a public company

and the information is accessible) and then compare this to their current or previous company.

Walker says it’s important to ask about base compensation, bonuses, benefits and other perks. Extras are still being awarded. According to ExecuNet’s 2009 *Executive Job Market Intelligence Report*, 29 percent of executive-level positions filled in 2008 included compensation packages that contained sign-on bonuses; 32 percent had stock options/equity and 39 percent of executives who filled those positions received other perks.

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The bottom line is executives need to very clearly and accurately demonstrate their value to a new organization in order for that company to be able to justify the new (and increased) starting salary they request.

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Any increase could likely be aligned with the salary you earn with that former (or soon-to-be) company. Many recruiters say they often ask to see a candidate’s W2 forms so a starting point for salary negotiation is established before the recruiter presents candidates to a client. “As a recruiter, I always discuss general salary parameters in the very first conversation with a prospect,” says Patricia Lenkov, founder and CEO of New York-based Agility Executive Search. “There is no point getting into lengthy discourse, interviews and other meetings if the salary of the job is not going to be sufficient.”

Honesty is vital when discussing your salary with recruiters and hiring managers. Dora Vell, managing partner of Massachusetts-based Vell Executive

Search, mentions a CEO candidate whose compensation declaration was different than the figure contained on public documents. “He explained that he was also doing consulting on the side for the company and our client decided to terminate this candidate’s candidacy,” says Vell. “In this case, the W2 would have been accurate, but not the ethics of it.”

Enabling a Smooth Transition

Some recruiters say the leverage executives have in regard to compensation at a new company is determined by their current employment status. “If a person is out of a job involuntarily, then he or she may have less bargaining power,” explains Lenkov. “If he or she is employed and not looking for a job and gets called by a recruiter, the salary discussion will have a very different flavor.”

Attitude also makes a difference in the negotiation process when it involves an executive in transition. “The only difference between an executive in transition and one with a job is confidence,” says Miller. “You are the employee bringing the same value to the employer regardless of whether you are currently employed. If you convince a prospective employer of that value, you can get what you are worth if you know how to negotiate it. Timing the discussion about compensation until after the employer decides to hire you is important,” adds Miller. “Actively talking to other employers, even if you don’t actually have another offer, greatly increases your confidence and ability to negotiate. Actually having another offer increases your bargaining leverage dramatically.”

The bottom line is executives need to very clearly and accurately demonstrate their value to a new organization in order for that company to be able to justify the new (and increased) starting salary they request.

Csizmar refers to this as the “supermodel syndrome”: “Get the decision-maker to fall in love with you via a combination of résumé, articulated accomplishments and personality and you might find HR being told by senior management to make a deal — whatever the cost.” ■

Learnings from Landings

Six Degrees of Separation Mean a Lot in Job Search

Practically everyone you know in your personal and professional life is a potential contact for a new job. You can't discount the potential value of any connection. ExecuNet member Jerry Kramer agrees with that thinking wholeheartedly. Such diligent networking helped him land his dream job in a new industry in seven months.

Kramer, who secured his new position as vice president and general manager at a multimillion dollar organization in June, advises fellow job seekers not to assume the person next door can't be helpful in your job search. "The notion of six degrees of separation is alive and well," says Kramer. "You would be astonished by who you know and who they know. Networking works. Don't minimize its importance, regardless of how 'uncomfortable' it may be at times."



The bottom line is to leave no stone unturned. Let everyone you know understand that you are 'in the market for a new opportunity.'



Kramer says he used "all channels" when conducting his job search. This meant his networking reach included job sites, retained recruiters, previous colleagues/bosses/direct reports, community contacts and social friends. "The bottom line is to leave no stone unturned," says Kramer. "Let everyone you know understand that you are 'in the market for a new opportunity.'"

At the same time, you have to know how to communicate with each of these

different networking contacts. Kramer notes how networking and following-up are two key components of building relationships with recruiters. "There's no such thing as being a pest as long as you do it professionally," he says. In dealing with different companies along the way, Kramer mentions how each company has its own way of doing things. "You have to learn to roll with the punches," he advises. "After all, it's their game, not yours."

While it takes time to build and maintain a strong network, it can also take time (typically more than expected) for executives to successfully complete their job search. Even when discussions with a potential employer seem positive, there can be a large gap in time between interviewing and an actual job offer — something Kramer experienced first-hand. "I underestimated the lapsed time it would take," says Kramer. "In my case, I was in contact with the retained search firm in November. I got in front of the hiring manager and his trusted advisors in February/March. I received and accepted the position in late May. And from March until the time I accepted, even though I knew I was the preferred candidate, I never thought the formal offer would happen."

Set Realistic Expectations

Kramer contends that while the process didn't move as quickly as he would have preferred, he understands that it's necessary to not let the timing affect your focus as you continue your quest for that new position. "You've got to be patient and willing to hang in there," says Kramer. "Set your expectations that this is not a short journey. Plan for the worst and don't set yourself up for disappointments. I can attest that your patience and perseverance will be rewarded. I still wake up in the morning and have to pinch myself...I have found my dream job in every way I can measure it, switching

industries after 30 years."

A little self-reflection helped Kramer get to this point in his career and reach this goal. "Probably the most important thing I did was to take inventory of who I was, my talents, my experiences and my future value...and separated all of that from the positions I held in the past," explains Kramer. He says that provided him with a solid platform to help him accomplish these job-search strategies and goals:

1. Make sure I was over-prepared for every interview/interaction I had with the hiring executive and their team.
2. Listen.
3. Communicate to them what I heard and how I was equipped to address it.
4. I displayed enthusiasm and passion. Basically, I projected myself into the position, thereby creating a lasting impression in their minds as to who I was, how I would fit and the value I could bring to them in the future.

Connecting the Dots

It was Kramer's ability to illustrate to his potential employer how he could help the organization now and in the future that most likely clinched the deal. Being able to present a hiring manager with an onboarding action plan is a powerful strategy and one that can easily separate a candidate from the competition.

"The bottom line is I laid it on the line. After several interactions with the decision-maker, I presented them with a 30-60-90-day action plan that outlined how I would approach the role," explains Kramer. "While I didn't have all the details and knowledge to do this in a comprehensive manner (I took some risk), it gave them a good sense of my style, approach and probably most importantly, how much thought I had put into the position. As luck would have it, no other candidate [displayed his or her portfolio] to this extent." ■

Your Career Advisor

The Power of Champions

By Howard Seidel

In my 20 years of working with executives in transition, one of the biggest predictors of a person's quick success in the job process, in good and bad times, is the strength of his or her personal champions.

What is a Champion?

Champions are those people within a job seeker's network who will proactively advocate for them to other business decision-makers. They aren't necessarily mentors, (though they can be) and they aren't just anyone within your personal network. Champions are a subset of one's professional network. Most people have network contacts who they will meet and offer advice and may even introduce them to other contacts when needed. However, your champions do more than that — they actively seek out people and tout your strengths. They sell you to the market because they believe in you and your capabilities.

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The power of champions is contingent on two things primarily: their enthusiasm for you and their influence in the markets you are trying to reach. The more influential the champions, the more impact they can have on your job search and your professional success.

The Importance of Champions

By personally campaigning for you with people they know, champions can help you to stand out in a very crowded sea

of job seekers. For example, a champion will endorse you to a hiring manager and articulate why you are the best fit for a specific role, even when there are gaps between your experience and the formal job description. When there isn't a specific position open, champions can proclaim your overall business value, sometimes prompting organizations to think about creating a role.

So how do you develop champions? No action that you take guarantees that a champion will emerge — but here are some things that can increase your chances for success.

Perform Quality Work

It goes without saying that producing quality work is an important way to build a network of champions. However, not all quality work is the same. Some kinds of work make life much easier for the people around you — especially your boss. Taking on these types of projects tends to be the kind of work that engenders one's champions. Make it a point to know the critical issues that most worry your boss and other senior executives and be that person who can fix those issues, at least within the context of your functional domain.

Communicate Your Success

Quality work can't build advocates when it goes unnoticed. It is important to communicate your successes to the people who matter. That doesn't mean you have to be a blatant self-promoter, which can quickly turn people off. Smart professionals know how to appropriately communicate the value of what they are doing inside the organization.

Build Solid Trusting Relationships

Advocates often develop because you have formed a relationship with them built on trust, integrity, loyalty, and sometimes, friendship. That doesn't mean you need to socialize with someone to have them become a champion — though it can help. But it does speak to the value of forming a bond of mutual respect.

Sometimes a strong relationship with someone may prompt them to serve as your champion even if they haven't worked with you directly. In fact, some champions even emerge outside of a formal work context altogether — for example, within your community or social groups.

Work for the Right People

Just as some people make better mentors than others, some are more likely to be more effective champions. How do you know? Sometimes it's reputation, and sometimes it's a gut feel — does this person seem like someone interested in others or just themselves? How do others in and out of the organization describe them? Gravitate to people who you suspect can fulfill that champion role.

What About the Reluctant Boss?

What do you do when you work hard for someone and he or she won't champion you? This is a common issue for executives in professional service. You did great work, worked long hours, were loyal, but nevertheless, the senior management who could help do not. Maybe it's that they just don't realize they can be helpful, but in any event it is completely appropriate to be a little more aggressive in this situation by asking them directly and confidently for their assistance and reminding them that you've earned it.

Cultivating and utilizing champions wisely is a powerful career tool. Finding the right champion is both a combination of luck and skill. You can't control everything, but manage what you can effectively. As you think about building your own network of champions, think conversely about the people whom you could champion and what you can do for them. ■

Howard Seidel, JD is a partner at Essex Partners, a division of Keystone Partners, and provider of highly customized career transition and management services exclusively for senior executives. He can be contacted at EssexPartners.com

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not changing your personality or natural work style, but embracing and expanding who you are. Here are some tips for getting started:

Have a game plan. Rather than winging it on the people part of your job, have a game plan. Prepare for high-stakes meetings and conversations — anticipating questions and rehearsing your responses. The fact is, just as you strategize for key projects and tasks, you need to plan ahead for connecting with people — and take regular timeouts to refuel your energy.

Communicate early and often. It's easy for introverts to be out of sight — and out of mind. So, take the initiative in sharing information — communicating early and often with higher-ups, direct reports and project stakeholders.

Match the medium to the message.

Resist the temptation to hide behind email. For every exchange, match the medium to the message — determining if email, phone or face-to-face is best. Email may be great for quick exchanges, but it misses the mark in critical high-touch areas, including developing relationships and delivering difficult news.

Use social networking to set the stage. Technology is a great tool for preparing to meet people in person. Use networking websites such as LinkedIn, Twitter and ExecuNet to set the stage for connecting with others at get-togethers and special events. You can introduce yourself and find common ground — all in a low-key, yet friendly, way.

Get your voice in the room. Without delay, speak up in meetings and conference calls. Try to make your first comment no more than five minutes into the session. You need to stake your claim as a leader, but the longer you wait, the harder it becomes.

Value humor. “A smile is the shortest distance between two people,” mused entertainer Victor Borge. As a reserved, inner-focused contributor, you can overcome perceptions of being standoffish or too serious by smiling, laughing, and having fun now and then. You need not “yuk it up” — just be good-humored.

Practice. Practice. Practice. Learning new skills and behaviors may be uncomfortable at first, but with conscious repetition and refinement, you can manage your introversion — and thrive in the extroverted business world. ■

Jennifer B. Kahnweiler, PhD is a workplace and careers expert and author of The Introverted Leader: Building on Your Quiet Strength. Founder and president of AboutYOU, Inc., an Atlanta-based leadership consultancy, she is an executive coach and corporate speaker. Kahnweiler can be contacted on the Web at AboutYouInc.com and TheIntrovertedLeaderblog.com

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doing so with courage and skill so that you maximize your chances of success and minimize the chances that you will be taken out or pushed aside.

Q. The practice of adaptive leadership requires the leaders to forge connections. Would you share why it is vitally important for adaptive leaders to speak from the heart to inspire people?

A. Technical problems live in people's heads, in their logic systems. They are

susceptible to facts and expertise. Adaptive challenges are about beliefs, values, loyalties and ways of being. They live below the neck, in people's hearts and stomachs. If you are going to reach those parts of the anatomy between the neck and the navel, you have to start from your own.

Q. There is a section in the book called “Protect Troublemakers.” What role do troublemakers play in adaptive leadership?

A. Most organizations we encounter have troublemakers, people who enjoy pushing

against the flow and causing disturbance. Most of the time they are useless at best and often undermine progress. There is often a desire to silence them, but if you silence them the 80 percent of the time when they really are just getting in the way, you will not only fail to get the benefit of their contrariness when they are the only ones asking the difficult questions, observing that the emperor has no clothes, and pointing out the elephant in the room, but you will send a message to the rest of the organization that you do not tolerate people raising tough issues or engaging in courageous conversations. ■

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Founder & CEO: David Opton

Executive Editor: Lauryn Franzoni

Editor-in-Chief: Robyn Greenspan

Editor: Marji McClure

Online Editor: Will Flammé

Copy Editor: Carol Hamilton

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ExecuNet

295 Westport Avenue

Norwalk, CT 06851

Phone: (800) 637-3126

E-mail: info@execunet.com



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