



Hot Hints for Women on the Move

By Kathleen Rich-New - *The Executive Woman's Coach*

1. Learn how to brag

Women must learn to call attention to their results in a way that creates interest and more questions. Many women cringe when the opportunity to talk about their results comes up. As little girls, we were discouraged from bragging and appearing too pushy. Yet little boys were always pitching the coach, teacher or their parents on why they should be the one chosen. No shame or reprimand for them. If you don't learn to market your results the promotions and raises will go to others who are less talented and less deserving than you.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Create a list of two or three stories you could causally talk about if you found yourself in the elevator or walking down the hall with a VIP. Use humor and create stories that highlight your results. They will remember your stories.
- Write an article for the company newsletter.
- Publish an article in a professional journal about your work.
- Brief a colleague on what are doing and let them do the bragging for you, then offer to do it for them. It's called traveling with your own PR agent.

How will others know what you have done lately?

2. Develop your "It"

Many women are passed over for executive promotion because they don't have "it". "It" means confidence, connection and presence. Learn how to enter a room and make a personal connection with everyone in it. Be direct in your manner and don't fidget. Polish your professional speaking skills through Toastmasters or lessons at a comedy club. Learn how to use humor and stories to make your point. Be prepared to ask questions. Challenge assumptions that you don't think are accurate. Get comfortable with disagreeing with ideas, not to be confused with disagreeing with the person. Speak up in meetings and be specific. You were hired to help the organization be more successful and they expect you to tell them what you think. One female executive told me, "In the beginning the men would just interrupt what I was saying. It took a while, but I learned how to make my voice heard." If you don't say anything, then you are not contributing.



How do you connect with others? How do they know what you think?

3. Listen to the sound of your voice



The #1 problem with the female speech pattern is ending statements with the voice inflection of a question. A rising pitch makes you sound unsure of yourself or that you are seeking approval. Also, when women are under stress often the pitch of their voice increases and are perceived as hysterical. Focus on keeping the pitch of your voice level. Get a voice coach if you need one, it is an investment in your success.

What message does your voice send?

4. Just say it

Ask your question or make your statement, but don't preface them with excuses, background information, apologies or qualifiers. No one cares what your excuse is, and you just draw attention to failure by repeating it. Don't ever apologize for what you cannot control like, "I am sorry the traffic was so bad." Stop using qualifiers like "perhaps"; it makes you sound passive and doubtful. Don't ask permission, as in "May I ask a question?" Just ask it.

What's your question? What's your point?

5. Create a professional image

Use images and color schemes in your business and marketing material that speak of professionalism. There is a whole field of study around colors and the meanings they hold for people. Do your homework to create the right impression for with potential clients, which means no girlish images like frilly fonts or pastel colors. Even Mary Kay Cosmetics has moved away from their trademark pink Cadillacs. Marketing or advertising agencies can help you create an image.

What image does your material send?

6. Dress for success

World and corporate leaders are always well dressed and you should be too. Women have more flexibility in the range of clothing they can wear, so use it wisely. Stripes and plaids break up the lines of your clothing so stick to solids and use accessories for accents. Wear shoes that are comfortable otherwise you will be in pain and it will show. Oprah loves her high heels, but she admits she can't walk far in them. Forget the perfume! There are too many allergies and work is the wrong market for interludes. When making presentations avoid large jewelry and bracelets, anything that sparkles or makes noise. Design what you wear is to bring attention to what you are saying, not what you are wearing. Take your cue from female TV news anchors; you are focused on listening to them, not looking at their outfits.



What do others see when they look at you?

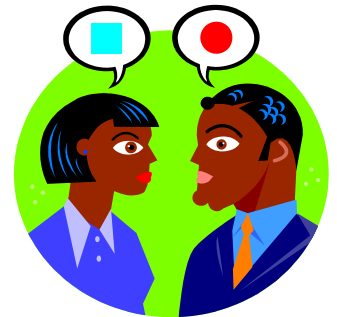
6. Control your time and focus

“A detrimental trait of working women is the ‘mothering’ urge. Women will interrupt their work, change their direction, and otherwise lose productivity and focus in order to accommodate a colleague, friend, or even a stranger,” according to international consultant Alan Weiss. Senator Hillary Clinton makes the same point in a story about a meeting with the partners in her Little Rock law practice. “We had just finished lunch when one partner showed up late. I immediately wondered if he had eaten yet. Then I looked around and realized not one of the men there was the least bit concerned. I suddenly realized I could not take care of other people all day. I had to stop reacting to everything or it would sap my strength.” Remember, whenever you say “yes” to a distraction you are saying “no” to something else like focusing on your priorities, leaving work in time to see your daughter’s game or to exercise.

What is the best use of your time right now? What are your top priorities?

7. Handling conflict

Learn how to handle conflict. Most women hate discord and try to avoid it. When it occurs, they react defensively rather than responding assertively. If hurt feelings and sulking are your usual responses, you need some help. When there is fear of conflict, team members don’t fully engage in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas which can bring results to a higher level. Let go of your attachment to using your idea or keeping harmony. Instead focus on the best outcome possible using the collective creativity of the group. It is not about you. Look at it as a game or a debate. Think, “Differences of opinion get my energy and thinking going!”



How much better can we make this?

9. Believe in what you do

The TV series *The Apprentice* has viewers glued to the screen. A colleague was describing the show to me, “It’s like watching a train wreck. Two teams compete and someone gets fired from the losing team. It is fascinating to follow Donald Trump’s logic as he makes the final firing decision.” One show had the teams buying art to sell at an evening art show. The winning team all agreed on the artists they liked best, the losing team did not agree on the final purchases and no one liked the selected artists’ work. Trump told them, “You didn’t love their work. You didn’t believe in what you were doing. It showed. That is why you lost! So someone is going to get fired.” Working at a job you do not like or for an organization you do not support makes for a very long and dreary life. At the executive level the work is too demanding not to love what you do.

Is your heart really in your work?

10. Get coaching from the best



It is fun to listen to other women and learn about their career journey, but don't limit your learning to them. Look around for others who are successful, they obviously know something. Open your mind and your time to those who are more successful regardless of their profession or sex. You may not like their ideas or methods but if you don't know about them you can't adapt them to your style.

Create a Master Mind group of successful people to help you think bigger thoughts and give you input on your ideas. Find others with the courage to tell you "no" or that your idea is bad. This is not a time for gathering girl friends to tell you how great you are. Coaching from others can fine tune your abilities, correct flaws and accelerate your performance. The world is too complex and demanding for us to have all the answers. We need others who can help guide us. Top performers in all areas have coaches; executives, business owners, singers, actors, athletes, TV anchors and personalities. Each of them were clear about enhancing their performance and their probability of success.

Who is coaching you? Why?



Kathleen Rich-New is President of **The Executive Woman's Coach**, specializing in coaching career women who want to improve their results, start their own business or find that elusive life balance. She has coached executives in companies that include Apple Computer, Nortel and SGI (Silicon Graphics.) She has a MBA and a Master's degree in International Human Resources. She brings a holistic approach to personal coaching that leverages over 20 years of leading change and innovation in top corporations. Kathleen is a speaker at regional and national conferences and is the co-author of *Looking for the Good Stuff...a guide to appreciating and enjoying life.*

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Coach \ˈkɒtʃ\ *n.* 1. a vehicle for getting from where you are now to where you want to go.

