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Four questions to ask yourself before seeking a promotion

You want a promotion.

It's partly about money. In the era of skimpy across-the-board raises, the way to get a significant salary bump is to get a higher-responsibility job.

But it's also about moving ahead in your career. You think you're ready. Now, how to prove it to management?

Management consultant John Beeson suggests four key questions to ask yourself before making a promotion pitch to your boss.

Beeson, author of "The Unwritten Rules: The Six Skills You Need to Get Promoted to the Executive Level," says you need to know:

- What criteria does your organization use in making promotion decisions? What strengths and weaknesses are evaluated? What skills must be displayed?

If the criteria aren't publicly stated or apparent, ask for a "career consultation" talk with your supervisors or other managers to find out exactly what they're looking for.

- Can you show those sought-after skills or capabilities in your current job?

If you can't now display the required assets for a promotion, it's time to ask about moving to an intermediate or different job — or seek out more responsibilities in your current position.

- Are you projecting yourself as someone who can be successful at a higher level?

If you can fairly evaluate yourself, you should assess whether your dress, your personality and your communication skills fit the image of an executive in your organization. If not, work to align your appearance and conduct.

- Have you built a strong external network?

If you're not already an active member of your industry or professional trade association, start now. If you don't attend industry conferences and seminars, start now. If you don't stay well informed about industry trends and best practices, start now.

By knowing the answers and responding to those four questions, Beeson says, "you can avoid falling into the common trap of believing that simply producing strong results in your current job guarantees advancement."

<http://www.kansascity.com/2010/12/25/2539859/four-questions-to-ask-yourself.html>