

## Step 1: Review Techniques



Are you ready to increase your visibility the right way? Begin by reading these techniques.

### ☐ **Technique #1: Meet with your key stakeholders at least quarterly**

CEB (Gartner) research indicates that 74 percent of leaders work with more stakeholders than they did three years ago. Key stakeholders consist of your manager, senior leaders, internal customers and colleagues that you provide service or support in some way. When I am working with a leader, and this comes up as an action that will help them move forward, 95 percent say “Jennifer I do not have time. My calendar is full of meetings. Sometimes I am double or triple booked.”

Visibility is a choice and involves intentionally and consciously taking action to create the right opportunities. If your key stakeholders are informed about the work and projects, it builds trust and they speaking about you in favorable ways to others. You have visibility without being in the meeting. Someone is talking about you and the GREAT work that you do and how well you collaborate with his or her team.

How often do you meet with your key stakeholders? Go from being seen as a doer to someone who knows the importance of building relationships.

### ☐ **Technique #2: Attend business updates where key Influences speak**

Every organization has business update meetings. Senior leaders attend these events and present the state of the company, new initiatives, updates, as well as make announcements. Being visible requires that you are seen. Instead of dialing in or participating online, attend the meeting in person, especially if you are in the same location. Avoid falling into the trap of thinking it is more important to multi-task. One of my coaching clients implemented this and quickly realized how she had been missing out by not being in the room. You get to see senior leaders; they get to see you or meet you for the first time.

Listen to what the senior leaders say. If appropriate, and you have a question, ask it. Not just any question, but a thought-provoking question that ties to their content and the bigger strategy of the organization. If they have a networking or happy hour afterward, attend so that you can mingle. During a coaching session this past week one coaching client said “I forgot how important it is to spend time with people more casually so that you can build trust. The evening events made a big difference in how I see my colleagues.”

## Step 1: Review Techniques (continued)

### **Technique #3: Ask to participate in high visibility projects**

What is the different between a project and a high visibility project? The difference is in the level of impact and exposure you will have to senior leaders. If you are a Director or below, consider projects sponsored by leaders two levels above where you are today. If you are at the Vice President level, this may be closer to one or two levels above.

Research the most talked about business initiatives by looking at announcements or the intranet. During a 1:1 with your manager, ask how you can become a member of the team. If your mentor or sponsor has any projects, inquire about becoming a member of the team. One of the leaders I work with engaged his mentees to help with a project. As a result, those who participated had their names mentioned in email correspondence to a corporate function that many had no previous exposure. In addition, they were recognized for their leadership ability demonstrated. They all received visibility by participating in the project. Others now see them as having greater value, creativity and ideation ability.

### **Technique #4: Participate in learning events**

Participating in learning events is a great way to build your network and ultimately your visibility. Imagine that you are nominated to participate in a learning event with leaders from different business units and functions. Initially, you might see it as another thing to do or you might be excited that someone thought of you in that way.

See this is a GREAT opportunity to learn new skills and build your network. Many of these programs will give you access to senior leaders, assessments to learn more about your current ability, and networking opportunities. What question can you ask the senior leader that shows you think bigger or have knowledge of key business initiatives? During the networking event do you make a conscious effort to have a conversation with leaders you do not know? During the 1:1 meeting with your manager express that you have an interest in participating in a learning event should the opportunity arise.

### **Technique #5: Have an engaged Board of Directors**

You may be saying, "Jennifer, I heard that before. It is not anything new." You are right; it is not new. And yet, many leaders do not have a Board of Directors, and if they do, they are not actively engaging their board or their board is not current. So what if you have one. It is the active engagement with your Board of Directors and strategically integrating the relationships you have with each one into your overall visibility plan.

When is the last time you updated your Board of Directors? Michael, a very savvy senior director, realized during one of our discussions that he wasn't meeting with his mentor at all anymore and he didn't know how to end the relationship. He had not thought about who might be a better mentor for him at this stage in his career. Who is your mentor? Who are your sponsors? Who are your confidantes? These individuals can help you create a visibility plan.

## Step 1: Review Techniques

### **Technique #6: Network, network, network**

Research suggests that successful leaders spend 70 percent more time networking than their less successful counterparts. How often do you spend time networking? In recent days with email and instant messaging it is easy to slip into a mode of working versus spending time getting to know others.

Strategic networking isn't collecting the greatest number of business cards or meeting with as many people as possible. This involves having a plan for reaching out and maintaining relationships with colleagues. One of my clients recently told me that she feels so inauthentic when she networks because she really doesn't want to get to know people better. She wants to go into her office, do her job, and leave each day. Although that is her choice, she is frustrated that she has not gotten a promotion. If this sounds like you, you have a choice to make. You can avoid networking and yes you make it to a certain level within the organization. Then, your career may feel as if it has plateaued.

Being strategic and very thoughtful allows you to network with purpose so that you can feel genuine. What is your plan for networking? Whom would you like to meet and get to know better? What areas of the business would you like to learn more about? Who can you meet with in those areas of the business? Challenge yourself to meet with leaders and colleagues at various levels. How often are you proactively meeting with colleagues and peers who are not key stakeholders?

### **Technique #7: Help a business leader solve his or her problem**

You are meeting with your sponsor and, because of your area of expertise, she asks you a question about how a process works. She knows that you have the answer or at least an opinion because the two of you have talked in detail about your role. Do you answer? Yes, of course, because you are helping her solve one of her problems.

Alternatively, you are meeting with a leader in another area of the business, and you ask them, "what is keeping you up at night these days?" and the leader shares that they are having a challenge with X. It just so happens you do not know about X, but a week later when you are researching something online, you find information about X. Do you send that? Yes, you make time to send it with a note reminding them of your previous conversation.

Using this technique helps your visibility because you are providing relevant information to leaders to help them solve a business problem.

## Step 1: Review Techniques

### Technique #8: Lead a high performing team

This should be of no surprise. A high-performing team is a group of employees who align with and are committed to a common purpose and goal which causes them to consistently show high levels of collaboration and innovation that produce superior sustainable results.

Whether you have direct reports or not you have opportunities to be the leader of a team. Three tips for leading a high-performing team are 1) use coaching skills to increase engagement, 2) find ways to connect with each team member which will help you build strong relationships, and 3) be consistent to build trust. Consistency does not mean that you treat everyone the same it means if you have a 1:1 with one team member you want to have 1:1s with all team members or that you listen to what all team members have to say versus only those who have the loudest voice.

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Aristotle*

When your team is doing great things people take notice, and it helps with increasing your visibility.

### Technique #9: Highlight the achievement of others

If someone is very helpful, acknowledge them individually, with your manager or to his or her manager. Speaking the achievement of others shows that person and others that you are comfortable with letting others be in the spotlight. It shows that you can identify the skills and talents of others and have the confidence to share so that a colleague can be recognized for his or her efforts. Increasing one's visibility isn't all about him or her. It recognizes that you can not do things alone.

If you have direct reports, mention the name of the employees who worked on the project. There is an African Proverb that says "if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far go together." You can only go far if you recognize others. Giving credit where credit is due sets you apart from the leader who is repeatedly saying "I." See this as an opportunity to build stronger relationships.

When is the last time you spoke about a colleagues achievement or recognized your employees in an all-hands meeting?

## Step 1: Review Techniques

### ☐ **Technique #10: Represent your manager at meetings or on projects**

Imagine you are sitting in a meeting with your peers when your manager asks the question, who would like to represent me at the next staff meeting. What do you do? Hopefully, you indicate interest. Preparing for and attending the meeting will give you exposure to your manager's peers and manager's manager. Remember you are there to represent your manager. This is not the time to talk about an idea that you and your manager disagree on because that can backfire and quickly turn into the visibility you do not want to have.

Meet with your manager and discuss what he or she would like you to discuss or take notes on during the meeting. You want to sound intelligent and informed. Spend time preparing beforehand. If you are meeting with senior leaders and you know they wear suits to the meetings, wear a suit that day.

Now, what do you do if your manager does not select you or invite you to represent him or her? Ask the question, "what do I need to do differently to be considered in the future?" Listen, take notes, and thank your manager for sharing this information. Then, develop a plan to address the feedback.



### ☐ **Technique #11: Be collaborative**

Collaboration is defined as two or more individuals working together to achieve a common goal. A true collaborator has a strong will to involve others and work with them to achieve greater results and performance. A leader can be seen as collaborative if he or she 1) seeks affiliation with people and teams, 2) works with other functions and divisions to share wisdom and best practice ideas, and 3) learns about other functions or divisions proactively.

Whereas collaboration is a wonderful way to increase your visibility, it is only one of many tools in your leadership toolkit. There are times when it is best to be directive, in a teaching mode, advising, or using your coaching skills. I refer to these as the different lanes leaders drive in every day.

For this resource, we are focused on collaboration. This skill will tap into your ability to exercise your emotional and social intelligence. How well do you have self-control? How effective are you at managing relationships even when there is tension in the air?

## Step 1: Review Techniques

### ❑ Technique #12: Form a mastermind group

Merriam-Webster defines mastermind as a person who supplies the directing or creative intelligence for a project. Forming a mastermind group is a smart way to bring together like-minded colleagues to discuss topics that increase the creative intelligence of all who participate. It develops your leadership skills without having direct reports. This could be technical in nature or have a leadership focus. Now you might be wondering how this increases your visibility.

Well, here is a little secret. You will invite people to join the mastermind and have to “sell” them on the vision and benefits. These are the same skills needed to be effective in your current position. It is a way to practice those skills in a low-risk situation so that when it really matters, you are not putting the skills into use for the first time. Also, masterminds have guest speakers to help expand the thinking of the group. Inviting the guest speaker and meeting with him or her beforehand to prepare for the day helps increase your visibility.



### ❑ Technique #13: Use the language of business

Senior leaders make decisions based on the impact a project or activity will have on the business financials. When is the last time you read the annual report? Learning the language of business and using it in conversations will cause a leader to sit up and take notice of what you are saying. It leaves an impression in their mind that you are thinking bigger than your current position.

How does the work you or your team does impact the organization? Which business imperative or goals are you impacting? If you are not already doing so, start thinking about the answer to these questions today. Then, when you are giving updates, share how you and the team are having an impact on the business. How does the work you do impact the profit and loss statement? If you do not know, this is a perfect starting point. Do some research so that you have an answer to this question.

For this resource, we are focused on collaboration. This skill will tap into your ability to exercise your emotional and social intelligence. How well do you have self-control? How effective are you at managing relationships even when there is tension in the air?

## Step 2: Assess Your Current State



Now you are ready to assess how frequently you engage in these techniques. Using a scale of 1 (rarely use ) to 5 (most used), what is your current rating? Place that in the current rating column. Then, identify your desired rating. Finally, rank the order of importance each technique has on you moving to the next level or position.

Technique	Current Rating	Desired Rating	Priority Ranking

### Step 3: Self-Reflection



Write your answer to each question in the space provided.

**Which techniques do you do very well?**

---

---

---

**Which two or three will take you outside your comfort zone?**

---

---

---

**How do you want to be perceived by others?**

---

---

---

**What is your current Leadership Brand?**

---

---

---



**Step 4: Create an Action Plan**

Identify no more than three actions you will focus on for the next 90 days. Then, identify what your focus will be for the next 90 days.

Technique	Action(s)	Timing

Now you are ready to increase your visibility the RIGHT way! Wishing you continued success.

Jennifer Smith  
CEO and Founder  
Passionate Leader Institute  
[Jennifer@PassionateLeaderInstitute.com](mailto:Jennifer@PassionateLeaderInstitute.com)  
[www.PassionateLeaderInstitute.com](http://www.PassionateLeaderInstitute.com)