

How to stand out to senior people

Although organisations are becoming less hierarchical, senior people still play a significant role in your career development.

The right senior person sponsoring you can lead to more options and opportunities. However, the fear of failing and the uncertainty of what to do might prevent you from building senior relationships.

Which senior people influence your progression?

Ways senior people can help you

Sponsorship

Spot opportunities and champion you.

Support

Invest in your work, your projects and your career

Making decisions

Help you to prioritise and work out a way forward

Learning

Provide experiences, expertise and mentoring



10 Ideas for action

1. Find their filters

If you understand their filter it's easier to find points to connect. Spot the lenses they are looking through at work. *e.g Helen = do it fast, Sarah = do it right.*

2. Ask yourself "What do I think?"

Have your own opinion before you ask for a senior person's perspective. It shows you're confident enough to have a point of view, but also open to listening and learning to others.

3. Follow up with focus

If you have something of value to contribute after a meeting, be the person who follows up with reflections, insights and ideas.

4. Ask them "What's most important now?"

Find out what their biggest challenge and opportunity is over the next 12 months. Think about how your strengths could be useful in solving them.

5. Influence the influencers

Ideally, you want a senior person's key influencers to know and talk highly of you. *Map who those people might be and what you could do so they see you at your best.*

6. Resist the pressure to be in "present mode"

Senior people are often more interested in having a conversation than being presented to. Don't present information that could be emailed. *Pick out a key point and invite discussion instead.*

7. Own your identity outside of work

Spend time in communities connected to the industry you're in or to the profession that the senior person is a part of. *The more interested you are, the more interesting you are to others.*

8. Ask quality questions

Have some go-to open questions that are designed to improve your understanding such as:

- *What would a good outcome look like for you?*
- *How would you like to stay updated on this project?*

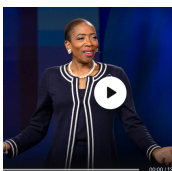
9. Make the ask

Preparing and pitching your asks shows that you are proactive and taking ownership of your progression. Managing the 'no's' and 'not yet's' well will also help you to build a better relationship.

10. Be consistent

Consistency is a shortcut to trust. Closing the 'say/do' gap by consistently showing up with energy and enthusiasm and approaching challenges with optimism will help you stand out.

Recommended resources



How to find the person who can help you get ahead at work

Carla Harris's motivating TED Talk



So, You Want To Be An Impact Player? Here's How To Do It

Forbes' article about Liz Wiseman's work on impact



How to improve your presence at work

Squiggly Careers podcast episode #307 making presence practical.