

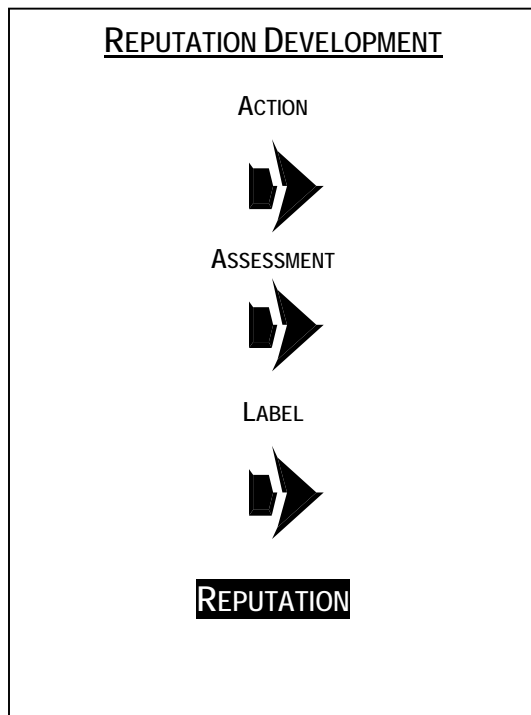
Building Your Reputation

Your reputation consists of stories people tell about you.

The further removed people are from first hand experience of your performance, the more their assessments are based on hearsay. Rumors move quickly in organizations – whether or not they are accurate – and your reputation can be enhanced or damaged by those stories.

Your reputation often precedes you in life. Word of your character and competence paves the way in your organization, profession, industry, or community. To build a positive reputation, think before you act. How do you want to be seen? By whom? What sort of impression do you want to make? Who is important for your future?

You need to know what your reputation is and manage it proactively. Remember, if you do not manage your reputation, other people will.



You can change your reputation, but it takes commitment, time, and energy.

Take note of discussions you want to have with others in order to:

- Get specific feedback on their assessment of your capability
- Ask for feedback or coaching on a specific competency or practice
- Widen their assessment by giving them examples of prior accomplishments
- Change or broaden your reputation in some way



ACTIVITY

Explore your reputation further by answering the following questions.

- Who are two to three **leaders** in your organization, profession, and/or industry who have power over your reputation?

- Who are two to three **customers or clients** (external or internal) who have power over your reputation?

- Who are two to three **colleagues** in your organization, profession, and/or industry who have power over your reputation?

- If you asked these people, what would they say are your **most valuable assets**?

- What would they say are your **major liabilities**?

- Why do they say this? Name the specific **actions/behavior/events** that influence their assessment of you. Be specific!

- What do you say are your **most valuable assets**?

- What do you say are your **major liabilities**?

- Think about your career aspirations. What would you **like people to say** about you to help you achieve your goals (e.g., "You're admired by your customers.")?

- What would you **need to say or do** to have them see and describe you that way (e.g., talk with customers frequently, provide recommendations for product enhancement, etc.)?

- List three **actions** you could take to manage your reputation.

GETTING FEEDBACK AND GAINING PERSPECTIVE

Here are five steps that you can use to plan for and conduct a career conversation.

1. WHAT feedback do you want?

Decide specifically what areas you would like to discuss. Make a list of questions to target the conversation. For example what do you want to talk about regarding communication skills? development needs? future trends?

Place the name of 3 people from whom you would like feedback on a post-it and place it on the facing page. You would probably be smart to include your current team leader/manager, a co-worker and an internal customer.

2. WHO can give you feedback?

Many of us are blind to our strongest skills. Other people can sometimes see us more clearly and are less likely to take them for granted. We may be humble about our own skills because we were taught from an early age not to brag or blow our own horn. Therefore, it is necessary to get feedback from outside sources.

There are people in addition to your manager who could provide advice and information about your career development. Think about peers, internal customers, special project teams or former managers.

Given the reputation exercise, what feedback do you want to get?

A great way to set up a powerful feedback discussion is to ask people to complete the following:

I want you to do **more of...**

I want you to do **less of...**

I want you to **continue...**

I want you to **get ready for...**

For each of the 3 people, specify what feedback you want. Include it on the post-it.

Getting Feedback and Gaining Perspective, Cont'd:

3. WHERE is the best place to ask for feedback?

An ideal time may be when you have just finished a project, or are about to begin a new assignment. Do not pick a time when people are just rushing to a meeting. Arrange for a time when you can be assured of their undivided attention.

Choose a place where you will have the full attention of the feedback provider. Try to guarantee privacy.

4. WHEN is the best time to ask for feedback?

Precisely how you phrase your request for feedback will determine the quality of the response. In addition to asking the person for specific information, also tell them why you want to know what their assessment is. Ask the question in such a way that even the most hesitant person would feel comfortable answering it.

Review your performance assessment and answers to the questions on reputation. Complete the five steps for each of the three people from whom you want feedback.

Select the right moment. This might be when you have finished a project or perhaps when you are just starting one. Remember when does not mean merely scheduling time, it means thinking strategically about when specific feedback will help you the most.

5. HOW can you set up a career conversation to ensure that you get quality input?

The manner in which you phrase your request determines the quality of the response. Practice how you will phrase your feedback request in such a way that the provider is well prepared and will want to give you quality feedback.

SAMPLE

Who?	Jane Doe
What?	“What projects do you want me to start preparing for? What new skills do you think I'll need?”
Where and When?	Her office at 10 a.m.
How?	“Jane, I admire your foresight for developing people. Therefore I'd like to get your ideas on a couple of questions about my future. Could we meet for an hour next week?”

Who?

What?

**Where
and When?**

How?

QUESTIONS TO ASK IN A CAREER DISCUSSION

1. What do you see as my strongest skills and abilities?
2. How can I provide more value in my current job?
3. How can I acquire broader skills and better knowledge of the business??
4. What are the trends you see in our profession/industry?
5. How might I prepare for and stay ahead of these trends?
6. What do you see as the next chapter in my career development?
7. Is there any specific training you would recommend?
8. Are there any books or industry periodicals that you would suggest I read?
9. Is there anything on the Internet that I should become aware of?
10. Are there upcoming projects or initiatives that would expand my current job?

Your Two-Minute Pitch Worksheet

Your two-minute pitch is the presentation you give when asked the question, "tell me about yourself." Its purpose is to give your listener enough information to begin an interesting and productive exchange. Your pitch may vary in length depending on how much your listener wants to know, but the following six segments are basic to most pitches:

1. Your headline (to get attention)
2. Your key skills and qualifications
3. A brief work history
4. A story that illustrates your most impressive accomplishment and one that utilized your key skills
5. The contributions you can make, the benefits you have to offer
6. What you are looking for and/or what you want from the listener

An Example of A Two-Minute Pitch

_____ suggested that I speak with you.

For the past three years I have been an Associate in Citigroup's Engineering Department. I was recruited by the company after I finished my Engineering degree. I have worked with several engineers and have learned a lot about Citigroup, in particular. I am very organized and can juggle the needs of multiple projects and people. I have strong communication skills and enjoy interacting with a variety of people, like architects, engineers, project managers, and administrative staff.

To give you an idea of a project I handled recently -- one of the people I work with just went out on maternity leave and another was traveling on a special project. We had to get out a proposal, so I was shuttling back and forth between the two of them, getting input from their manager, also, who is very, very busy and producing the draft and final document. In the meantime, my other work had to get out and the phones never stopped ringing! We were able, with all this going back and forth, to meet the deadline successfully.

I really like Citigroup and feel good about our business. I am exploring growth possibilities where my organizational and communication skills can be useful..

Recently, I participated in the Young Engineers Forum and got motivated to talk to people in other departments. You were recommended as someone who would be useful to talk with. These are some of the questions I have:

- What kinds of background, experience and education do you look for when promoting people in this department?
- How do you see your business here developing in the next several years?
- What suggestions and ideas do you have as to what next steps I might take in pursuing my goals?
- Are there other people whom you think it would be useful for me to talk with and perhaps be mentored by?