

10 Ways to Promote Yourself in India's Competitive World and Beyond

You are a young, qualified Indian wanting to succeed but few people actually know you; where do you go from here? If nobody knows about you or what you can do for them, how will you ever get to where you want to be? This is a key question for your career or business, especially in the rapidly growing economic conditions of India.

livering training, speeches and presentations, I meet people who are in danger of remaining anonymous – and unsuccessful – despite having masses of talent. Others receive promotion ahead of them; the successful person has got the message across, while the overlooked one has not.

My field of public relations is becoming more popular as

cost much and it works.

Here are some ways of really kick-starting promotion, for your career or as a business. By choosing a few of these and taking action now, you will be starting to get your message across to the people who can make you successful. Why wouldn't you do that?

1. Refine your targets: Make lists and revise old lists, of people who can help you succeed. The more you identify the target the easier it becomes to get your message across. Then try to accumulate information on what is important to them. You might have to segment these lists according to their interests or your priorities.

2. Get out and about: Sitting behind the desk just won't do it. You've got to get out and

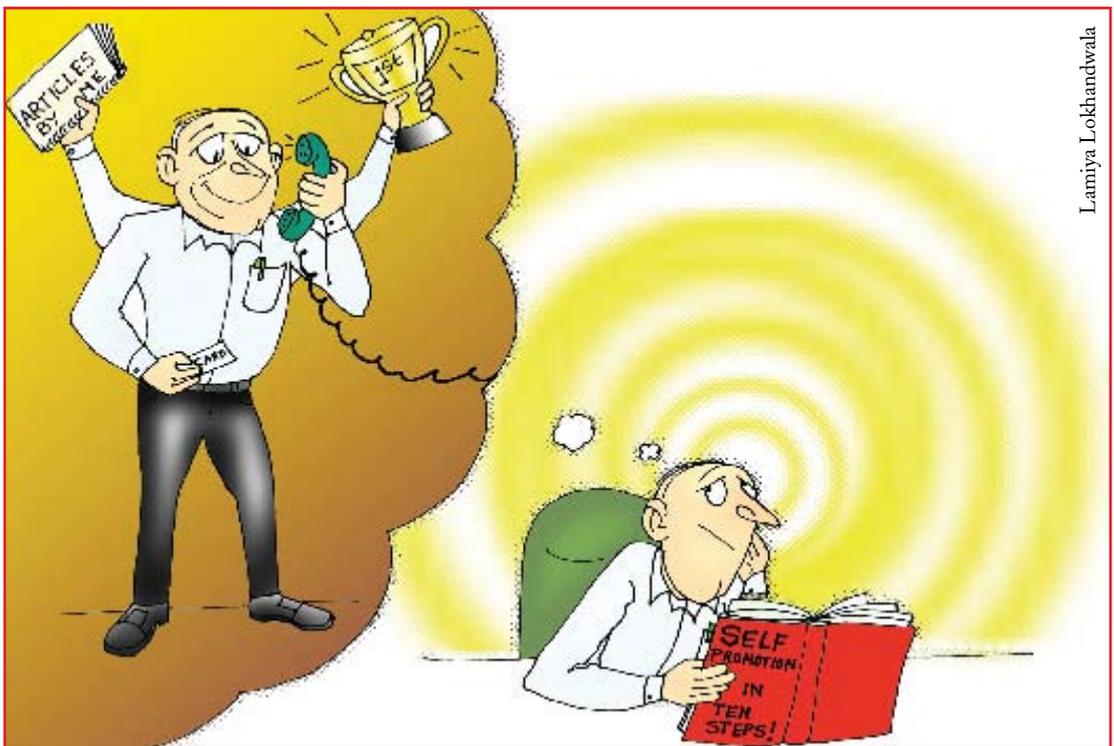
The article provides some special ways of kick-starting promotion, for your career or business. These ways will work wonders for you if you have a clear idea who you are and why you are different – that is, if you have a clear brand. Brand applies to people as much as organisations, because it is about personality and position.

It seems an obvious, even stupid, question, doesn't it? But time and again when de-

individuals and companies – especially small to medium size – are recognising that it doesn't

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about and there are two great ways to make yourself do this. One, join a group or club that meets regularly and make sure you attend everything. Two, phone friends and people on your list and drop by to see them.

3. Write articles: Too many executives and professionals keep wonderful information locked away in their brains. Get it down on the computer, and see who might publish. Even if you don't get published, sending the article to key contacts as something that might interest them is value added communication.

4. Issue media releases: The media is looking for stories. But two words of warning; try to be newsy (focus on what's the big deal at the moment and try to use that as a hook) and expect rejection. Just try again. Find a special publication that is interested in your field.

5. Make a speech: People who make speeches have credibility, they're "experts", so it's worth all the sweat and nerves. To succeed, you will need to be able to speak with persuasion, at least to small groups. Start small and easy. What about offering to discuss a current issue at your local Rotary or other club, and keep offering from there. Who knows where it might lead. To seriously push public speaking, get somebody to work with you on the material and your presentation to make it a real winner.

6. Be community active: By becoming active in a local community group or charitable cause, you will become a stronger person. Ultimately this will be noticed; but remember, do not help a good cause just to get noticed; do it because you believe in it.

7. Get into online forums: In your field there are many online chat rooms, newsgroups

or forums where you can get your message across. You can often even include an e-mail contact or link your website, so it's a good contact point.

8. Use alliances: There are many others out there who are trying to get to your target audience, and not all of these are competitors. Allies might include a local business, an organisation or some other group. Start talking to potential allies, see if you are comfortable enough to offer to promote them if they promote you. Or combine your strengths for a marketing push or seminar program.

9. Write a letter: Don't forget in this age of technology that a personal letter is powerful. Writing letters to your targets once a quarter is a good way to sustain your presence. Sending letters to editor can gain media exposure. Remember with letter writing to stick with it (send a letter once every two months to key targets), while being clear in the letter what you are writing about and why.

10. Improve networking skills: Networking pays off in the long term. Learn how to make sure you exchange business cards at every meeting or function you attend. Improve your ability to describe what you

do and who you are. And by improving your ability to ask questions, you will have better conversations.

These approaches will become so much more powerful for you if you have a clear idea who you are and why you are different – that is, if you have a clear brand. Brand applies to people as much as organisations, because it is about personality and position. Too many people don't have a clear idea of why they are special, so to these people I simply say: Stand for something! If you don't stand for something, why are you in business or why are you offering yourself as a professional?

If you are dealing regularly with Westerners, it is important that you are easily understood, so reducing accents and slowing speech are good tips. And remember to use some of your natural communication advantages – keep on smiling and laughing, and keep on talking about cricket and sport. These are great conversation starters.

In this competitive world that India is now part of, you can sit around wishing things would happen or you can get out there and enjoy the communication journey. □

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