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HOW TO GET PROMOTED IN THE NEXT 6 MONTHS

Welcome to The Highly Valued Leader podcast where I make it simple for leaders at all levels to amplify their value. My name is Mel Savage and I went from working in the mailroom at a small ad agency to making multiple six figures in senior management at McDonald's, to running my own multiple six-figure executive coaching business. I've had huge successes in my career and epic failures. All of it taught me the world-class leadership, mind and skill sets that I simplify for my clients and share with you on this podcast. I'll help you reset your leadership style, demystify the politics, and help you become the highly valued leader everyone wants on their team. Get ready for the most honest, direct and revolutionary leadership coaching you've ever heard. Let's simplify leadership together.

Hello, leaders. Welcome back to the podcast. Today, we're talking about how to get promoted in the next six months. It is particularly hard for leaders. I don't want to say it's particularly hard—it's just different. Getting promoted as a leader is different from how you got promoted as an individual contributor. Because as an individual contributor, all you had to do was be reliable, dependable, and sometimes throw some extra hours at it, and that differentiated you as someone who should be supported and nurtured.

If you had tendencies to be an independent thinker or to go beyond just the details, like being able to think forward or strategically or with a big-picture perspective, you just had to demonstrate those skill sets, meaning you just had to demonstrate that you had that ability. You didn't necessarily have to market it in a big way, and that's great because there are so many people at the individual contributor level just doing those things: showing up, being reliable, and demonstrating the ability to think independently and beyond what they were doing. That was enough to differentiate you.

But as you become a leader, there are fewer people to compete with, and everyone is largely able to do those things. So, to continue getting promoted, you need to change your strategy. And I know a lot of people tend to be in situations where you want to be promoted. You ask for a promotion, and they tell you that it's going to come, or they say, *"Here are some hoops you need to jump through."* You jump through those hoops, and you're like, *"What about now?"* Then there are new hoops, or something happens, or there's some political drama, or they say, *"We need to hold on for a second,"* or whatever it is—you're being told, *"Not quite yet."*

So today, I want to talk to you about taking more control over the growth of your career to the point where you could say, *"Look, if I want to be promoted in the next six months, I can do that."* I'm going to give you some steps and ideas on what you can do to make that happen for you.

But before I do, I want to take a moment and share some really big news, and I think it's really appropriate that I'm sharing this news today. It's my 100th episode on this podcast, and I am officially announcing the launch of my group coaching program called ***Promotions on Demand***. This is specifically for leaders—anyone who is a

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pre-executive, who manages people, or who is moving out of that individual contributor role into leadership. Whether you are a new leader, a seasoned leader, or at that VP level trying to get to the C-suite, this program will cover what you need to do to get that next promotion.

My goal with this group coaching program is that the promotions come to you; you don't chase them. You will be doing some behind-the-scenes work to make that happen, but you're not going to be chasing anything. You're going to be very grounded, planting all the seeds—not just for promotions, but for job opportunities, career opportunities, the big opportunities at work, and the big projects. All those things are going to come to you. That's what we're talking about in my new group coaching program, *Promotions on Demand*. The program is dedicated to helping you get the promotions you deserve.

The reason I'm doing this as a group program is that I have been doing this already—it hasn't been the focus of my one-on-one. My one-on-one coaching has always been about helping leaders be better leaders. In the context of that, many of the people I coach have been curious about wanting to get promoted, how to advocate for themselves, and how to sell themselves, and we do that. So many of my one-on-one clients have been getting promoted that I thought, *"You know what? I want to break this off and make it a group coaching program,"* for a couple of reasons.

One is that I think this is a problem many leaders face, so it's important to have a dedicated resource for it. Secondly, with a group, you're in a room with people facing the same problem, and you can support each other. Going through the process of getting promoted and advocating for yourself isn't easy. It's great to have someone like me to support you, be a cheerleader, and always be on your side, but imagine a room full of people doing that as well. How great would that be? This program focuses on building the confidence and resilience to advocate for themselves.

They're going to have a personal marketing plan, a very clear direction for themselves, and they'll be able to make the time to do this work. I think that's one of the things that really stops people from being successful as they move towards promotion, as they want to advocate for themselves, but they don't necessarily dedicate the time for this professional development. I'm going to show you how to carve out the time successfully and consistently, and to have the courage, confidence, and resilience to keep showing up for that time. You'll also have a strategic and tactical plan with this personal marketing plan to execute against it.

I wanted to announce that today; it's really big news. I am in pre-launch mode, telling everyone about the program. Enrollment for this program opens officially to the public on **December 7**. If you want to get pre-access to enrollment, I want you to sign up for my free training called ***"Get Promotions Dropped in Your Lap."***

The focus of this free training is going to be, first, on giving you an outline of how to do this work: how to get promotions on your timeline without incessantly applying for jobs on LinkedIn, chasing your boss, or going to networking events. How do you do this for yourself? I'm going to share my strategies with you, and I'm going to share what the program would look like if you wanted to join this group coaching program. This training is free, on **December 5**, and by signing up for it, you get a two-day head start on enrollment for this new group coaching program, *Promotions on Demand.* I'm going to keep this program small at first, so if you want to be first in line, you have to sign up for the free training. Go to https://melsavage.com/getpromoted/ to sign up for the free training on December 5, and you'll get advanced enrollment in *Promotions on Demand* just by signing up for the

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free training. For those who don't sign up for the free training, public enrollment starts on December 7 and goes until December 19. The program itself starts on January 13.

I know I just gave you a lot of information. Here's the bottom line: If you want to get promoted in the next six months and you want help doing that, go to https://melsavage.com/getpromoted/ and sign up for the free training. That's the only step you need to take today. Everything else will become clear after that. You'll know exactly what the program includes, how to sign up when to sign up, how much it costs, and what's included. All the things are going to be revealed to you as you go.

All you need to do today is go to https://melsavage.com/getpromoted/, sign up for the free training, and all will be revealed. I really encourage you to do that if you're someone who's a leader who wants to get promoted in the next six months, who has trouble with self-advocacy, who would love to be in a room full of people who are supporting each other through this journey, with me on your side and walking you through how to set up your personal marketing plan. Build your confidence, build your consistency, and find the time to do this work, this is the program for you. It works. I have so many success stories, which I'm going to be sharing with you over the course of the next six weeks.

But today, what I really want to do is share a little bit of the strategy that I'm going to be sharing on December 5, and that is really about how to start to market yourself to get the promotion. Because while you buy into the idea of self-advocacy, you're not really sure what to do. You've seen people advocate for themselves, but it's always been done in a very super weird way, and you don't love it. You don't want to emulate that type of behaviour. You want to be able to do it authentically for you. And because you're not really sure how to do that, you're not doing it.

But the key is, when self-advocacy is done well, you actually don't notice it's happening. That's why you don't have a really great role model for how to do it effectively. So that's what we're going to be talking about, how to do this effectively, and in addition to learning how to do it authentically, I think the other reason people don't necessarily advocate for themselves is they don't really know the story that they want to tell. There is a story out there about you, but it's not one that you seem to control. Other people have stories about you. Sometimes they're fair, sometimes they're not fair, and you don't necessarily control that story.

When you self-advocate, when you have a clear marketing plan, a personal brand plan, you have a clear story for yourself. You know exactly what you want to say to whom, and you tell that story consistently, and you own your own narrative. Right now, you're not owning your own narrative. Maybe your boss thinks one thing, but there are other stakeholders that think another thing. Some of your peers like you and some of your peers don't so much. Some of your reports are happy, some of them not so much. And they all are saying some similar, some not-so-similar things about you, and maybe focusing on areas that you don't want them to focus on. How do you control that narrative? We need to really focus on that.

I think the other thing that people do right now, the reason that they're not getting promoted, is that they mainly are talking to their boss about their promotion. Your boss is your first line of conversation around your promotion. And for a lot of people, it's their only line of conversation. They also may speak to their skip manager, basically your boss's boss. Maybe you have a mentor you talk to, but you basically have a very narrow audience of people that you're speaking to about your promotion, and it's largely inside your organization.

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So because of that, you're just narrowing the possibilities of opportunities coming to you, not just because it's inside, but because even though you're only speaking inside, you're only speaking to a small group of people, and you hate the idea of networking, and you spend almost no time networking internally or speaking to your external connections because really, you're putting the job first. And because you're doing that, you're avoiding any type of professional development. You're not necessarily focused on marketing yourself, essentially, because you don't think that's a priority. You're focused on doing the work.

So really, you are not advocating for yourself, you don't have a clear story, you don't make time to advocate for yourself, and when you do, you only are talking to your boss, maybe your skip-level manager, about your promotion, and you're only talking about it a few times a year, at the key points in time in a year, versus consistently throughout the year, because you don't necessarily think it's right. You think, *'Oh, there's a lot going on. We have really important things to talk about. I can't be talking about myself all the time.'* That's the message, the story, that we send to ourselves.

By the way, you don't need to talk about yourself all the time, but you need to talk about yourself consistently. So you're thinking, *'I don't want to talk about myself all the time. It's not right. It feels selfish.'* And so basically, what you end up with is a messy story where you don't control the reach or the frequency of that story being told, and you don't have a clear story that you want to tell, and if you did, it has low reach. You're not talking to enough people, and it has low frequency. We need to clean all of that up.

When you clean all of that up, you will get opportunities coming to you. You will get promotions coming to you. If you want to be promoted in six months, you will be promoted in six months. You can be; it's not impossible. It's just about the cadence and the focus that you're using to talk about this thing, and you will get promoted in six months without chasing people, without waiting around. You will get the promotion that you want and that you deserve.

So what I want to cover today, and I've talked about it a little bit in this preamble, is I want to talk about three simple strategies that should be on every leader's personal marketing plan. I call this my spotlight strategy, and I'm going to give you a little bit of an overview today. I'm going to give you even more of an overview in the free training. And then, of course, if you decide to join me in my *Promotions on Demand* program, we're going to build your personal marketing plan together. I'm going to be there behind you, helping you do this. So if you want to join that free training, it all starts there: https://melsavage.com/getpromoted/

The three simple strategies are this–just remember this. Number one, know your story. Number two, choose your audience. And number three, plant a seed. That's all you have to do over and over again: know your story, choose your audience, and plant a seed. Know your story, choose your audience, and plant a seed, over and over again. That's it.

I know that it sounds simple, and there are obviously things to do within each of those buckets, but you can do it. And I want you to know it actually is simple, and it's not nearly as complicated as a lot of the projects that you manage right now. You are already a master executor. You already know how to get results. If you're a leader, you have already proven your ability to be dependable and reliable, get things done, and drive results. Now all we're going to do here is create a framework and a strategy for you to be able to do the same thing for yourself. And we have to create the discipline around that for yourself as well. That's why working within a group or working

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with a coach is so useful to help you create that skill set, to help you build that muscle for yourself. But the three steps are knowing your story, choosing your audience, and planting a seed over and over again.

Let's just talk about knowing your story. What's involved there? What will we talk about at this free training and ultimately help you build for yourself? The first one is knowing what you want. What is it that you actually want to create in your career, in the short term, in the long term? What is it? What are your goals? What are your objectives? So many people come to me and don't set those goals. Don't have a career goal that they can articulate.

And the reason for that is one, I think this is the major reason, is people think they just can't achieve it. They don't set goals because they're afraid they won't be able to achieve them. *'I would love to say that I'm going to be the COO of my organization, but I don't know if I can do it, I don't know if I want to work those hours, and I don't know if I'll ever be able to get there. I don't know if I'm smart enough, and I don't know how to get there.'* There are all these question marks in their head, and we've got to get rid of all those question marks. What I always say to my clients is, what is it that you want? Let's just talk about that. What is it that you really want to create in your career? And then we'll figure out how.

The 'How' is none of your business right now. Let's just figure out what you want in your career, and then we'll figure out how to do it. And then they'll say, *"Yeah I want to be COO at this kind of company with this kind of pay and blah, blah, blah, but that just means I'm going to have to work 60 hours a week and always be available. I don't know if I want to do that."* You know what? When we build your career plan, we will take into account your life.

Do you want to be a COO that works 45 hours a week? Let's be clear about what it is that you want to create, not just the actual job and the title and the amount of money, but what does it look like? The size of the organization, where you live, how you work, how many hours you work, and what kind of leader you are. Let's talk about all those things because then we know more about the person that you need to become and the skill sets that you need to create.

If you want to be a leader who's a COO and works 45 hours a week, then guess what? You need to be a leader who's really great at managing up, showing their value without making it about the hours, learning the art of delegation, and learning how to really lead your time. Those are the things you need to learn how to do effectively. You need to learn how to set boundaries. You need to learn how to empower people. Everything is possible. You just need to set a goal.

The first thing about knowing your story is knowing what you want. The next thing is, what do I bring to the table? What are the benefits that I want to be able to demonstrate that I have? Some of those benefits that you want people talking about are things that you're really great at today. Some of them are things that you need to develop in terms of skill sets. That's fine. But we want to know what are the benefits of you and your brand that you want people to understand.

We spend a lot of time achieving stuff as leaders, but we spend very little time noticing our own achievements. Being able to speak about our skill sets, being able to speak about what's valuable about our style, being able to speak about what we actually specialize in. When I say specialize in, like in your function, in your industry, what are you particularly good at? I'm not talking about skills like *"I'm great at leading a team."* I'm talking about your specialties. If you're a marketing person, *"I'm really great at building strong brands."* If you are an operations person, *"I'm really great at creating simple solutions to complex issues."* What are these specialties that you have?

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I had a risk management client who was like, *"My specialty is how do you minimize risk in an AI world."* What are your specialties, your style, your skill sets that you really want to market? So you know the story you want to create for yourself, and then how will you tell that story? How will you frame that story in a really simple way?

I always say, what is it that you want people to say about you behind your back? When you know what you want people to say about you behind your back, then you start showing up that way. Then you start telling the story that way. So it's not just what you say about yourself. You can't just say one thing and not show up that way. We need to align the story with how you actually show up on a day-to-day basis. But before you can even figure out how to show up on a day-to-day basis, you need to know what that narrative is going to be. So you need to know your story. Once you know your story, then you need to choose your audience. That's the second part. Know your story, and choose your audience. Who needs to know the story, who needs to know up, down, and across your organization? It's not just your boss and your skip. Who in your other senior stakeholders? Who in the executive leadership team? Who of your peers needs to know and believe that story and have that narrative? Who of your reports? Who of your indirect reports?

And not just in your organization; maybe you have clients. Maybe you have really key vendor partners, up and down their organizations. When I worked at McDonald's, my ad agencies were my number one partners, and it wasn't just my direct contact at those agencies, it was also their bosses and their leadership teams. Because McDonald's is a big client, and if I were their main client, everybody would care about who I am, how I behave, and the relationship they have with me. It's important. They all have something to say. They all have influence. So who has influence over your career? And they need to be on your audience list.

And then you want to think about inside and outside your organization. If you put all your eggs in the basket of being promoted in your existing organization, your opportunities are just less. Your strategy is much narrower. I'm not saying you have to leave to get promoted. I'm saying we need to plant more seeds. The more seeds we plant, the more beautiful our garden, the more luxurious, the more opportunities, the more flowers, the more plants. The more things that grow, the more opportunities come our way. So we just need to be really prolific in how we speak about ourselves and who we speak to. So you need to choose your audience up, down, across, inside your organization, tangential to your organization, and also outside your organization, like outside your current role.

Once you know your story and you've chosen your audience, then we need to plant the seeds. What are the channels with those audiences where you have opportunities to plant your seeds? Sometimes it's one-on-ones, sometimes it's in meetings, and sometimes it's at executive team meetings. Maybe there are some people in the executive team you have one-on-ones with. But maybe with others, it's more the executive team meetings you go to. What are the channels where you have the opportunity to display yourself and your story with your audience? So it's one-on-one, it's meetings, it's presentations, it's interactions. There are lots of different things that are just normal, everyday things that you can either leverage or create with your audience. It's every single touchpoint inside and outside. So you sometimes need to be proactive in setting those things up.

So even though I had a million things to do and my sort of direct agency partner, I still would make time to meet with the president of the agency as a one-on-one, to go for a drink, to have lunch, to have a coffee, just touching base, what's going on. All of those things are very important, not just for running the business, but also for being able to plant seeds about what I want, who I am, or my narrative. You've got to have a plan of attack on that.

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Everything needs to be very intentional. And this is not manipulative. It's intentional. You have to be intentional about sending your message.

And that means outside too. How are you leveraging your connections, your colleagues, and your industry to get more channels of opportunity to plant seeds? Some of them are going to be very narrow, like the one-on-one conversations, and medium ones like maybe having meetings internally or being able to speak at an industry event. And some of them will be extremely broad, like a post on LinkedIn, for instance, or on your social media feeds or whatever it is. There are lots and lots of ways to plant seeds about who you are depending on what your goals are.

The key thing with planting seeds is to have a plan, and that's where a marketing calendar and quarterly goals come in. A marketing calendar, like a marketing plan, is about knowing your story, choosing your audience, and creating your strategies around what the things are, the key messages that you're going to say, etc., but the calendar itself is, what are the actual things that I want to achieve? And we will look at it on a quarterly basis. What are your quarterly goals? What's on your calendar on a quarterly basis? So how many one-on-ones do you want to have, and how many outreaches do you want to have? What are the key meetings that are coming up where you can be your best? What are the industry functions? What are the places where you could reach out to actually speak? What are the things that you want to achieve if you said you wanted to speak at an industry function twice a year? Let's put that on your calendar because then those are things that we need to create for ourselves.

But when you don't have a plan, it becomes extremely ad hoc. Your message is based on how you feel that day. Maybe you're just filling gaps. *"Oh, people are saying this about me; I better counteract that with over here,"* or *"I want to get promoted, so these two people need to help me."* No, we cannot be reactive when it comes to being promoted. We need to be proactive, and it doesn't take a lot of time—like, I'm talking two to three hours a week, depending on your timeline. If you want to get promoted in three months, it's going to be more than two to three hours a week. If you're not even interested in promotion, maybe a promotion is in the next 12 to 18 months, let's still start now and start planting these seeds and spend one to two hours a week really making this work for you.

If you want to get promoted in six months, let's do it two to four hours a week. Let's find the time for you to start implementing, creating, and implementing this plan. Because when you implement this in a consistent way with your confidence and you don't give up at the first failure, which is part of where the resilience comes in to do, you will have people coming to you and dropping things in your lap. That is the easiest way to grow your career, my friends, and I want to help you do that.

Your next step is to go to https://melsavage.com/getpromoted/ and just sign up for the free training. We're going to talk more about what I talked about today. We're going to go more in-depth. I'm going to be there to answer your questions live on the call. This is a live call, a live training. I'm planning an hour and a half, but I'm going to make myself available for more than that so if you have questions, you can stay on. I'm going to talk about this, and also about time management, and also about resilience and showing up for this plan, and how to do that confidently. So you need to come to this free training. https://melsavage.com/getpromoted/ and sign up. That's the only thing you need to do.

I'm going to also talk about my new program, ***Promotions on Demand***, and if that's something that's going to be of interest to you, that you think you want to go into 2025, this is the year you're going to start taking control of

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your career and getting things coming to you, then I suggest you go to https://melsavage.com/getpromoted/, sign up, and let's do this together.

Okay, my friends, that's what I have for you this week. I'm going to be back over the next five to six weeks with interviews from my most recent—not even all—but my most recent clients who have done this work with me and have gotten the promotion that they wanted. You're going to hear their stories. Some of them were just focusing on getting their awareness. Some of them focused on their confidence and self-belief. Some of them just never thought that they could take this kind of control. You're going to hear from all of them and I'm so excited to share their stories with you because I want it to inspire you to see what you can achieve for yourself.

That's what I have for you this week, my friends. I look forward to seeing you on the free training, and I'll talk to you soon. Bye for now.

Hey, if you want to simplify leadership while amplifying your value, then you need to get your hands on my free training. Head over to melsavage.com/simple for instant access to the training and get a taste of how I help my clients lead with ease and make more money in the process. I'll see you there.

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