



3 Ways Remarkable Leaders Get Noticed

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The following is a guest post by Joel A. Garfinkle.

Being a good leader — or even a great leader — is just not enough if you want to keep moving up in your career. You must be so remarkable that no one can help but notice you. You must do great things — not once or twice, but continuously — in order to stand out, get noticed, and propel yourself to the top of your company.



Three great ways to stand out are by creating new products, solving difficult problems, and actively seeking out opportunities to do something truly remarkable.

1. Create a new product

You can find ideas for new products all over the place, but one of the best ways is to listen to your customers. What do they want that you don't sell? Is there already a product on the market that will meet their needs? If not, you may have an opportunity to create a revolutionary new product that will fill this gap and satisfy an existing demand.

There are new products being released constantly, so you need something that is either completely different from what is currently available or a huge improvement. You won't stand out by making minor changes. You need something that people will get excited about and tell their friends about — something that is different enough to create a stir in the marketplace.

That doesn't necessarily mean it has to be difficult or expensive, though. Take the Starbucks Frappuccino, for example. It was a new drink that got people talking and eventually brought in hundreds of millions of dollars in sales. This drink wasn't invented in a

product development lab at Starbucks headquarters; it was the creation of an assistant store manager who took the initiative to experiment and come up with something new and different — and it ended up being a big hit.

2. Come up with innovative solutions for difficult problems

Declining property values in Genesee County, Michigan meant less revenue from property taxes for the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission. Faced with the prospect of having to cut back on staffing to make up for the budget shortfall, director Amy McMillan asked her staff to come up with as many \$10 ideas to cut costs as they could. As a result of implementing these \$10 ideas, the Parks Commission was able to save \$167,000 — enough to avoid making staffing cuts. Amy McMillan solved a \$167,000 problem by attacking it \$10 at a time.

Every large organization has challenges to overcome. What problems is your company facing right now? There is no reason you can't be the one to find the solution. You don't have to be an executive or even a manager to be a problem-solver. You just have to have great ideas and find someone in the company who is willing to listen and has enough authority to take action.

When you consistently come up with innovative solutions to the company's problems, you'll gain visibility with the top executives, which can open up career advancement opportunities and help propel you into a top management position.

3. Listening for Opportunities

You'd be amazed at the opportunities you can uncover if you just listen. Pay attention to what your colleagues, bosses, and customers are saying and when you hear something unusual, creative, or even outrageous, think about how you can act on it to create an opportunity to make yourself stand out as the remarkable employee you are.

Katie Dix is a great example of someone who is constantly searching for opportunities. The owner of Capannari's Ice Cream in Mt. Prospect, IL, she jumped at the chance to make an 18-scoop ice cream cone for Katherine Reutter, Olympic silver medalist in speed skating. Reutter had been quoted in the Chicago Tribune as saying that she'd be walking into the Closing Ceremony with an 18-scoop ice cream cone. Katie Dix made it happen.

Once you start listening for ideas, you'll find them all over the place. Next time someone says, "Too bad we can't," you should be thinking of ways that you can. Approach every problem with the mindset that there is a solution, and it is up to you to find it. Permanently replace the words "I can't" with "How can I" and you'll be amazed at the things you can do. Be truly remarkable, and you'll find yourself moving up the career ladder faster than you ever could have imagined.

Joel A. Garfinkle is recognized as one of the top 50 coaches in the U.S., having worked with many of the world's leading companies, including Oracle, Google, Amazon, Deloitte, Ritz-Carlton, Gap, Bank of America and Starbucks.

*He has written seven books, including *Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level*, as well as over 300 articles on leadership, team-building, executive presence, and getting ahead at work. Joel is regularly featured in the national media, including ABC News, NPR, the New York Times, Forbes, The Wall Street Journal and BusinessWeek.*



Visit his website and subscribe to his Executive Coaching Newsletter to receive a copy of his free e-book, "Proven Strategies to Get Promoted Now!"

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