

SmartBlog on Leadership

Engage. Innovate. Discuss.



If you were replaced, would anyone notice?

By [Joel Garfinkle](#) on October 21st, 2013 |

Do you feel like you're fading into the wallpaper at every business conference or networking event? Does your boss routinely ignore you in staff meetings? Do your colleagues land all the cool projects and hot clients? Sounds like you could use a memorability makeover. Here are three simple strategies you can begin using immediately to help you **stand out in any crowd**:

- Develop connectivity
- Become a specialist
- Create a signature style

Develop connectivity. Learn how to connect with people during the first 30 seconds after you meet them. This includes simple things like giving a firm handshake, making eye contact and calling the other person by name. But connectivity goes several steps beyond that. In any conversation, be totally present and give the other person your complete attention.

Don't be distracted by electronic devices. Texting or looking at your e-mail when you're talking with a client or co-worker is the ultimate in rudeness. Even something totally innocent, like checking a text to see where your kid is, can make you memorable for all the wrong reasons. In a social situation, such as a lunch or a business mixer, focus on the face in front of you. Don't let your gaze wander around the room, as though you were expecting someone more important or interesting to show up.

Your gestures and body language say a lot about who you are and about how you relate to others. Ditch the annoying habits like twisting your hair, clicking your ballpoint pen, or doodling on your desk pad. If you have the habit of crossing your arms in front of you, you're effectively shutting yourself off from the person you're with. Learn to keep an open posture, especially in one-on-one conversations.

Become a specialist. Find the thing you do best and make it your trademark. Advertise it, promote it, and make it your personal passion. Become the go-to person in your company for that particular skill. If you like creating unique presentations, perfect that art. Take classes, learn to use the software. If you have even the slightest hint of talent as a writer or if you can speak in public without stuttering, you are golden.

Good communication skills are so highly valued in today's workplace that many companies will hire people who lack other skills just to get a good writer or speaker on board. Take classes or seminars, get a coach or join a group of like-minded individuals. Then let your bosses and co-workers know you're available, and volunteer for projects where your skills will be noticed and utilized.

Create a signature style. Think about people who exemplify a particular style or who are known for looking a certain way. Queen Elizabeth has her stylish hats. Pope Benedict XVI will long be remembered for his red leather loafers.

Now, we're not suggesting you need to spend a fortune on a designer wardrobe or hand-sewn shoes. Neither should you necessarily opt for what's hot or trendy, unless you're in the fashion industry. Instead, look at your business environment and at those who are a rung or two above you on the corporate ladder. If you aspire to be a VP of marketing, for example, start dressing like one. Adopt a signature color, or invest in some good quality shirts, scarves or pieces of jewelry that **make a statement**.

Lee Iacocca said, "You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere." You don't need to stay in the shadows or get lost in the crowd. Everyone has something special that can make a lasting impact. Find your special something, polish it up, and let it shine. It can take you and your ideas places you might never have imagined.

*Joel Garfinkle is the author of "**Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level.**" As an **executive coach**, he recently worked with a midlevel manager who learned to develop her executive presence and gained the respect of her team, enhanced her profile with the company and built the confidence she needed to excel. **Sign up** to his Fulfillment@Work newsletter (10,000+ subscribers) and you'll receive the free e-book "41 Proven Strategies to Get Promoted Now!"*