

Position Yourself as a Leader in 20 Minutes or Less

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Positioning yourself as a leader will make your work more meaningful and advance your career. You can gain influence based on your title, or on knowledge and skills you already possess.

While it could take years to climb the ladder up into senior management, ***tapping into your personal strengths is something you can start doing right now.*** Learn how to use your current assets to build up your clout in the workplace.

Using Your Knowledge to Position Yourself as a Leader

- 1. Read daily.** Pick up books about business advice or any topic that interests you. ***The more you read, the better prepared you'll be to contribute to any discussion.*** You'll sound like a leader whether you're engaging in small talk or critiquing a new logo.
- 2. Sign up for training.** Take advantage of programs your employer offers. Brush up on your high school Spanish or become proficient with a new software package.
- 3. Browse during breaks.** Those brief intervals you spend on hold or pausing between meetings can be put to good use. Break out your phone and search for industry news. ***You'll stand out if you're the first one to notice a major lawsuit or merger.***
- 4. Take a course.** Many adults juggle full time jobs while going back to school. Schedule an appointment at your local university to see what you need to

complete your degree.

5. **Consult an expert.** Contact others in your network who would be willing to share their wisdom. Interview a colleague who has published a new book and promote her work on your personal blog. You'll both benefit from increased information and publicity.
6. **Shadow a star employee.** If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, a high performer may be pleased to show you the ropes. Let them know that you admire their style. Offer to assist them with specific tasks so you can learn from their example.

Using Your Skills to Position Yourself as a Leader

1. **Take responsibility.** *Prove that you can be trusted to live up to your obligations.* Develop a reputation for completing assignments and meeting deadlines.
2. **Document your accomplishments.** Make it a habit to write down your ideas and achievements. Looking over your victories will boost your confidence. Even the missteps will suggest adjustments you can make to do better next time.
3. **Express enthusiasm.** *Attitude is an important part of leadership.* Speak kindly to your coworkers and care about their welfare. Find gratification in your work and how it serves the community.
4. **Take initiative.** Be willing to go the extra mile. Volunteer for tasks that fall outside of your job description even if they're less than glamorous. Pitch in when the sales team needs a hand entering quarterly data.

5. **Share feedback.** Thank people for commenting on your performance and recommending steps you can take to further your professional growth. Offer constructive and tactful criticism that enables others to do the same.

6. **Give generously.** *Above all, let your colleagues know that they can count on you when they need your time and expertise.* Strive to be a valuable team member. Keep an eye out for anyone who's struggling so you can create mutually beneficial relationships.

Transform yourself into the kind of leader other employees will want to follow. Your knowledge and skills are valuable resources that can help you to develop your talents and inspire others.