Conquer Impostor Syndrome and Lead from Where You Are!

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Raise your hand if...

You’ve ever struggled to get leadership to understand the value of proposal management
Raise your hand if...

You ever submitted a proposal with pieces from contributors in adjacent roles that you didn’t think were “up to quality”
Introductions

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Agenda

**Impostor syndrome**: What is it and why does it matter?

**Toolkit**: Know your value

**Build relationships**: Tailor interactions to maximize impact
IMPOSTOR SYNDROME

“An internal experience of intellectual phoniness”
Of people have experienced impostor feelings

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- Impaired job performance
- Decreased job satisfaction
- Burnout

TWO SIDES OF THE COIN

Environmental

Individual
TOOLKIT: KNOW YOUR VALUE

Know your stats

Ask others

Embrace your style
KNOW YOUR STATS

# of proposals submitted
$ in to the organization
Success rate
Return on investment
Down-select rate

Focus on what matters to your organization
ASK OTHERS

“Hot Wash” after a major proposal effort

Ask for advice (instead of feedback)

Utilize resource/affinity groups
EMBRACE YOUR STYLE

Tools to identify strengths

Borrow language to describe strengths you know have

Define working conditions that lead to success

Strengths Finder
Myers Briggs
Working Genius
PRINT
Social Styles
You used your toolkit to know your value, NOW WHAT?
What are your proposal management pain points?
• Limited time to interface with leadership
• Unclear roles and responsibilities
• Territorial peers in adjacent roles
• Interpersonal tension among teams
• Not respecting agreed upon boundaries
• Throwing out the agreed upon “game plan”
• Need to “trust but verify” proposal deliverables from adjacent roles
• Communication challenges with virtual/distributed teams
• Team members who don’t respect deadlines
• Differing experience levels on a team

• Peers who “know it all” and aren’t open to new ideas
• Colleagues who need lots of coaching/handholding
• Team members who provide criticism but not solutions
• Lack of honesty about opinions and expectations
• Reactive bid decisions not aligned with strategy
• Lack of bid/no-bid criteria
• Inadequate institutional support for proposal effort
• Bureaucratic red tape
• Different visions for what the team is trying to accomplish
• Overuse of jargon
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
Tailor interactions to maximize impact

Be your own advocate

Model authenticity and empathy

Be dependable and consistent
Be your own advocate

Model **authenticity** and **empathy**

Be **dependable** and **consistent**
5% remember statistics

63% remember stories

Stories are more memorable than facts

THE STAR STRUCTURE

1. SITUATION
   30-45 seconds of background + context

2. TASK
   15 seconds that describes problem

3. ACTION
   30-45 seconds that explains what you did

4. RESULT
   15-30 seconds of accomplishments/impact
Use stories to persuade – Example

A new manager in your organization is pushing back on the proposal schedule you developed for a high-effort, must-win RFP.

How do you convince leadership to follow your proposed approach?
Desired Outcome: Commit to following proposed RFP schedule

**SITUATION**
Short timeline to submission with proposal reliant on SME input

**TASK**
SME felt like a rigid schedule was an extra burden on top of their busy schedule

**RESULT**
Despite submission IT issues, proposal successfully submitted on time with positive feedback from SME

**ACTION**
Customized the schedule to meet SME needs while retaining enough time to at the end to address surprises
Be dependable and consistent

Model authenticity and empathy

Be your own advocate

Be dependable and consistent
Personal User Manual

Working hours
- Protective of nights and weekends, if extra hours are expected let me know in advance
- Frequently work evenings and send deliverables outside of business hours, but no expectation that others will do the same

Ways to give me feedback
- Face to face, early and often
- Written in e-mail, so I have time to process

Common pitfalls/challenges
- Very detail oriented, if I’m getting caught in the weeds, call me out!
- Tend to focus on big picture, feel free to direct me towards action

Priorities outside work
- Responsible for kid pick up and drop off every day (include times)
- Planned vacation (include dates)
- In the middle of a move

Energizing tasks
- Skilled at facilitation—happy to run meetings
- Enjoy technical editing and document review

Preferred communication
- IM vs. phone for urgent questions
- E-mail for requests that require action
Credibility is assessed within the first 7 seconds.
EYES
Connect with audiences’ eyes. Make your point, move on to next set of eyes

FACE
Use appropriate facial expressions + smile

GESTURES
Use naturally & appropriately. Drop to neutral when not using

VOICE
Increased volume = increased animation. Use pauses to pace talk

POSTURE
Balanced stance. All movement has a purpose

IMAGE
Professional & appropriate for cultural setting

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I Just Don't you think?
I Feel... Right?
I Think...
Sorta
I Guess...
I Just
Might
Don’t you think?
Basically
Kinda
Be dependable and consistent

Model authenticity and empathy

Be your own advocate
You know what to do!

Be your own advocate
Model authenticity and empathy
Be dependable and consistent
WRAPPING UP

Feeling like an impostor is very common, but reframe and remind yourself that you are impressive.

Leverage your tool kit to recognize your strengths and become a valuable addition to any team.

Build relationships to make an impact and lead from where you are!
SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK