



How to polish your PR profile with your colleagues

History judges every Prime Minister on both his/her domestic policy *and* his/her foreign policy. Usually, politicians are loved at home and hated abroad or vice versa. It takes a special politician to be popular both at home and abroad. For a while, this could be said to apply to Sir Winston Churchill (although, by all accounts, he wasn't too popular in Nazi Germany for a few years).

Anyway - on a more mundane level – while you may aspire to a position of pre-eminence in your field of business (and a good PR adviser can help you get there, of course), you should not ignore the business equivalent of 'domestic policy': your reputation among your colleagues within your organisation.

So here are some tips to help you 'do your own PR' to achieve an impressive reputation among your colleagues.

Promotion makes perfect

A good reputation is an ideal insurance against adverse rumours and gossip. Make sure you exceed your targets, meet all deadlines, keep your promises and stay out of trouble. If you can stay above suspicion, the rumour mill should ignore you.

Prevent misinformation

Do all you can to keep your work colleagues fully informed and, thus, rumour-free. Be available to talk to the colleagues in your team and to tell them what you can.

If necessary, hold regular meetings to brief them on what you know – but, whatever you do, make sure that all your colleagues know what you know (or what you can tell them) and that they all know it at the same time.

Share news as soon as you can

You shouldn't wait until you know the whole 'big picture' before briefing your colleagues. For one thing, you may never know the whole story. For another, they will be pleased that you've taken them into your confidence and told them as much as you know yourself.

Stop stirrers

Once you've put your colleagues 'in the picture', encourage them to voice their worries and questions. That way, you can discover and then deal with any potentially difficult issues – preferably before they become difficult issues. And, if you don't know the answer to a particularly tricky question, that gives you the reason to go and find out – and then pass on the answer.

Identify the people who are hypothesising and rumour-mongering – and ask them to explain their concerns. Then deal with those concerns – ideally by reassuring them and giving them further information to allay their fears.

Steal a story's thunder

The best way to stop a rumour is to spread a new – true – story explaining why the rumour has arisen.

Distract and focus your team

If your team has time to engage in rumour-mongering, their targets might be a little too easy to achieve. Redefining their targets to make them focus on their job and leave them little time for idle speculation may pay dividends in all sorts of ways. This brings us back to the first point: make sure that you and your team always meet deadlines, exceed targets and so on.

This should enhance your reputation – and that of your team colleagues – leaving you time to promote your reputation more widely (which is where some professional help from PR specialists such as Bob Little Press & PR may come in handy, of course).