

**Self-promotion is an essential component of being a successful, contributing member of your profession and community. Materials scientists and engineers need to know about your achievements in materials science and engineering if they are going to collaborate with or hire you. How can you expect to advance in your field (and to advance your field) if your colleagues don't know about your work and your value?**

**With appropriate self-promotion, you share the full extent of the value of what you are pursuing in such a way that it encourages the other person to want to engage you further in a positive manner. You are sharing truthful information- we never lie nor do we embellish. We simply articulate what value our work has so the other party will want to continue learning more and will benefit from our contributions. And we do so in an appropriate form and medium.**

**In many ways, self-promotion is based in a spirit of generosity, because you are aiming to help the other party with their projects and goals by sharing information about how you have solved a problem. It is also about honor – you are honoring yourself, by communicating your value and current and potentially future contributions, and honoring the other party, by sharing this essential information via a means that is appropriate for both the content and the potential impact.**

**When you engage in appropriate self-promotion, you unleash and even create opportunities for advancement for everyone. So, here are 5 ways that you can promote yourself, appropriately, with honor, and in such a way that the community will understand your value and why you will help them advance the field of materials science and engineering.**

## **1** Use LinkedIn strategically.

Keep your profile and your experiences up to date, and when you have a milestone, announce it via a post. This is exactly what LinkedIn is made for, so use it to share with your network that you finished a project, are presenting a poster or a talk, published a paper or a newsletter article, mentored a protégé, or are attending the MRS Fall or Spring Meeting.

## **2** Apply for awards.

Many people talk themselves out of applying for any kind of award, fellowship, and even grant because they think they are not competitive enough. Don't listen to that voice! Instead take the bold move and apply for awards- think localized awards that are given by your department, institution, or regional government, think national and international awards, and of course, think professional awards, like those given by MRS. Every time you apply for an award, you are giving at least one person (a member of the awards committee) the chance to get to know you and how talented you are. And even if you don't win the award, you are still promoting yourself. And here's the thing- the more you apply for awards, the bigger chance you have of winning awards. Awards are the community's way of saying there is something special about you. And here's one more tip- consider serving on the awards committee!

## **3** Write an article.

I know you know to write papers, but here I am referring to articles in the media, such as your local newspaper, the MRS publications, and even your student newspaper. For example, you could write an opinion piece about the role of materials science in combatting climate change, or a Q and A with your colleague about her research. This exercise gives you crucial skill-building opportunities in strategic communications, and it also showcases you and your brand (your promise of value). It promotes you as a contributor and even an authority in your arena, and helps to build a buzz around you and your reputation.

## **4** Get to know the external relations team at your institution.

The staff at your university who collaborate with the media go by many different titles. They could be called public information officers, media or public relations (PR) professionals, external relations coordinators, science writers, or communications directors. Their job is to get the word out to the media about the work being done at the institution. So, they want to hear from you and what you are doing. They will write a press release, they will contact the media, they will help you get your work into the hands of journalists, who may write articles about it (if it is timely and news worthy). The PR people are on your side. Help them promote you by making an appointment with them to share what you are working on in your research group, and discuss potential story angles and ideas that they can promote to journalists (like me!) who are looking for to write about cool matsci innovations.

## **5** Promote others!

When you share with your network that your colleague just defended their dissertation, received a huge grant, or got a new job, you are not only showcasing their achievements, but you are articulating something very critical about your own brand and attitude: that you are a team-player, that you support and seek to advance your colleagues and peers, and that you celebrate everyone's success. It is incredibly professional, honorable, and generous to proactively announce (for example on LinkedIn or Twitter) that your colleague is presenting a poster at the MRS Fall Meeting, or that they won a prize. Which of course, is the very essence of self-promotion!

Concepts and portions of this Tip Sheet have appeared in the author's previous published works, including columns in *Physics Today* and other publications, and her book, *Networking for Nerds* (Wiley, 2015).