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# Introduction

If you follow the advice in this book, you will get promoted.

Having worked as a leadership advisor with many clients, over many years, I am in a position to be able to spot patterns of behaviour. As a consultant to an organization, not a member of the organization, I operate outside the system. This gives me a unique perspective on how the system works.

My observations have led me to realize that promotions don't always happen in the way that people assume. Getting promoted is not just about working hard and doing a good job. If securing your next promotion was as simple as that, then surely you wouldn't have needed to pick up this book in the first place!

If you have started to realize that promotion decisions are more nuanced, read on. If you feel like you are blocked in some way – within yourself, or by others – and you don't know why, read on. If you have been blindsided by peers getting promoted, and are concerned you are being left behind, then read on. If you feel you lack the 'secret code' to unlock what it really takes to get ahead and are starting to feel resentful or frustrated, then read on.

In this book I will provide you with insights about how promotions really work, and what you need to do to secure your next role. I will decode the mysteries and help you to get

promoted – but even better than that, I will help you to be strategic about your career and figure out how your next role fits into a longer-term strategy. That way, you will be as focused as an arrow – homing in on your target, totally clear about what you want to achieve and why – and your motivation, time and energy will be aligned accordingly.

This book is about providing you with a breakthrough approach to your next promotion, and the one after that, and the ones after that. It is about building your skills and intelligence in what it takes to get promoted.

I am on your side – and whatever your starting point, I will help you to get promoted. It is what I do for my clients, again and again, typically guiding them from ‘stuck in the middle’ middle management to eventual C-suite. I don’t preselect my clients based on any particular criteria, specific potential or innate talent for getting to the next level. I don’t conduct feedback-gathering prior to starting our work, to help assess whether the odds are stacked in their favour. I simply work with anyone who wants to get promoted, whatever their level, to help them achieve their goal – as long as they commit, and are willing to act on my advice.

At the start of my foray into coaching people on how to get promoted, the results always came faster than my clients or I expected. I noticed something interesting happening: that the momentum we created caused further momentum and acceleration, and ‘suddenly’ the promotion goal was realized. Now I know for sure we can always expect fast results.

I have worked for years on what it takes to get promoted. I am pleased to now be able to codify my approach in this book. Just as I help each of my clients get promoted again and again – faster and faster each time – if you are motivated to follow my advice, then it will happen even sooner than you think.

If you picked up this book, then you are either already ambitious or some part of you knows that you simply can't afford to stand still in your career and not get promoted. You likely already know that there comes a point at your company and in your career where you are either moving up or moving out. If you have been in your role for at least three years, it should be time to secure your next promotion. If you get passed over for promotion and find yourself in your current role for five years or more, then you should not take it for granted that you can keep your job for much longer. It depends on your company culture, of course, but typically there is always upward pressure from newer, younger people who are climbing the ranks and securing better positions. I don't like to use fear as motivation, but I want to be candid so that you are realistic. If you are not being driven by ambition, then you may have to be driven by practicality in order to self-improve and seek your next role. Your efforts will not go to waste. It is always good to show drive rather than be seen to be coasting in your role – especially if you are part of a competitive corporate culture where it is all about survival of the fittest.

In an attempt to go all out to help you secure your next promotion, I will leave no stone unturned in terms of tactics. I delve into all the key strategies that will take you from your current role to your dream role. If at first you find all the advice a little overwhelming, please know that you can start your promotion journey by applying just some of the ideas – over time you will be ready to add new layers of these strategies. Think of getting promoted as a skill to be mastered, not just a one-off transaction.

Look at this book as your coach, companion and guide on your get-promoted journey. For some of you, it really will be as simple as reading it once and finding an insight that

immediately unlocks the door onto how to get promoted. For others, it may be worth rereading the book, and introducing new habits and behaviours gradually. Whichever way you learn, the answers are within this book – how and when to apply them is up to you.

I don't regard my advice as 'hacks' – these are genuine insights into what it takes to secure your next role and progress in your career. You will find it very empowering and self-motivating to have a clear and insightful game plan. You will feel more in control. And as you change, the people around you will notice you, and your forward momentum will propel your promotion success.

I wish you well on your journey of reading this book, applying the strategies within, and enjoying all the exciting benefits and experiences that follow.

You can connect and share your experiences, questions and stories with me at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/niamhokeeffeadvisor/>

# 1 Why you have not been promoted – yet!

You may be feeling like you have no power over your promotion, and that you are at the mercy of your superiors. In fact, you hold most – if not all – of the cards in terms of shaping your future. There are many proactive strategies you can utilize to re-platform your skills and credibility, get noticed and get promoted. But let's kick-start your journey by dispelling some of the typical misconceptions about the promotions process.

## **Common myths and mistakes**

We would like to believe that all promotions are fair and that our company is truly the transparent meritocracy that it claims to be in the brochure. However, in reality, organizations operate in a highly social way. While everyone may aspire to a world of fairness, very often interpersonal conflicts, personal histories and preferences, pre-existing relationships and political agendas all get in the way of fact-based meritocratic decision-making.

You need to know that promotions are not always about fairness or transparency or just working hard. A lot of decisions are situational, contextualized and flawed, and they are often about timing.