

How to Flatter Effectively (and Not BROWN-NOSE!)

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If you want to ingratiate to get ahead, here's



how.

Advancing your career takes smarts and know-how, but another way to effectively get to the top, according to a university study, is by offering up some good old-fashioned flattering.

Effective flattering - not just brown-nosing - really can **boost your career**. But, you have to know how to do it - and do it well.

Two business school professors - Ithai Stern of Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management and James Westphal of the University of Michigan - have some insights on flattery. For the last few years, they have [studied](#) how professionals gained coveted seats on corporate boards. And guess what? Flattering got them there! Stern and Westphal concluded "that ingratiating behavior was the strongest single predictive factor for obtaining board appointments."

Following the study, the Kellogg School came out with a synopsis called "[Corporate Sweet Talk](#)", which includes the following ways to **effectively win over colleagues and partners** alike. This is what the AUTHORS recommend about flattery. If these techniques don't appeal to you, please don't shoot the messenger....me!

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- 1. Act as though you're seeking advice. Example: “How were you able to close that deal so successfully?”** Mentoring is popular — so let partner think that he or she can teach you something.
- 2. Argue a bit about his or her opinion or approach. Do not agree immediately.** Remember, lawyers love a good argument — especially if they think they've won.
- 3. Tell the colleague's friends or family how much you adore/admire her.** Hope that word about your praise ultimately gets back to the colleague.
- 4. Flatter by pretending that you're actually a reluctant flatterer. Example: “I don’t want to embarrass you, but your presentation was really top-notch. Better than most I’ve seen.”**
- 5. Agree with the colleague's values before agreeing with his or her opinions.** The goal is to convey how you both share the same vision.
- 6. Tell people in the colleague’s social network that you really share those values.** Again, you are counting on word getting back to the colleague.
- 7. Finally, hint that you are part of the same circle, such as a religious organization or political party.**

Is effective flattering a form of sucking up?

Sure - and, according to Stern and Westfal, that's okay, just as long as the behavior is carried out **tastefully, subtly, and professionally**.

The next time you're out networking or at a company gathering, effective sweet talk is one way you can work the room. **Ingratiating behavior** is a form of interpersonal communication that's not everybody's choice, but it has proven itself as one way to build business relationships.

Adapted from article [Give 'Em Lip Service](#) by Vivia Chen.

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