

**P**sst... y'know that assistant who started a year ago? The one with the smart outfit and supply of chocolate Hobnobs? They've just got that promotion you went for.

Your boss plans to tell you they had more experience. This is a big fib. You've been doing that job for three years, yet have been overlooked *again*.

Missing out on a promotion that had your name on it can hurt, especially when you have no idea why. "People feel the psychological contract they have with their employer has been broken when promotions aren't forthcoming," says Aidan Rave at recruitment specialists D4 Consulting. "They feel like their aspirations have been crushed."

With bosses not wanting to spell out your faults, it's easy to feel resentful. Before you email telling your boss exactly where they can stick their experience, find out where you're going wrong...



# The real reason you're NOT being PROMOTED

...and how to FIX IT, sharpish! BY JO USMAR

## You OWE me...

You've been doing your job for ages without any complaints, thanks. And isn't a promotion basically standard practice? "Some people think the world owes them a living," says recruitment consultant Jon Wall. "They don't step back to see if they actually deserve one or not."

**GET A PROMO PRONTO** Log everything you do for a week – Twitter updates and extended lunches included. Then review it. Does it impress? If so, use it to come up with five good reasons why you should be considered for a step up and present them positively to the boss. If not, go through your log noting down where you could do better. Then

do it. For at least three months before thinking about the big P again.

## SHOW your face

You may be super efficient, helpful and doing loads of tasks above your pay grade, but if no one notices, does it count? "You're a brand and have to sell yourself," Aidan says. "If you don't make yourself visible, management are going to choose the person who does. You don't have to be arrogant – just more vocal." **GET A PROMO PRONTO** The next time there's a work do, go. It may be the only time you'll be in contact with your boss socially. Have a brief chat so your appearance is noted. And when you've

done something particularly brilliant, email your boss congratulating the team. You're really congratulating yourself, but now you'll look kind *and* brilliant.

## Play DRESSING UP

Admit it. There are times when you rock up to work sans mascara, sport a creased dress, can't be bothered to pop on your heels and only just manage to drag a brush through those locks. Tsk, tsk. **GET A PROMO PRONTO** Don't dress for the role you've got, dress for the role you want – an old saying, but one that's still relevant. A recent survey found that 78 per cent of employers feel those who dress well in the workplace are more

successful than those who don't.\* So nab a pencil skirt and heels sharpish.

## LATE expectations

"If you're always late, it looks like you don't care. It's such an obvious mistake people make," explains David Clubb, managing director of Office Angels. "Even if you think being 10 minutes late doesn't really matter, it will to the people who are in on time every day."

**GET A PROMO PRONTO** Don't just set your clock 10 minutes fast – your mind will mentally press the snooze button. If your time-keeping rivals the White Rabbit's, imagine you're catching a flight *every* morning. The urgency that comes from missing check-in will get your bum in gear. Perk yourself up with a special wake-up playlist on your iPod during your commute.

## Leave out the SICK LEAVE

According to a study, small and medium businesses in the UK lost around £3.4 billion due to staff sick days last year\*. No, you shouldn't introduce the norovirus to the office, but neither should you see sick days as extended holidays. A duvet-day regular? Chances are, your company can't afford to promote you.

**GET A PROMO PRONTO** Just feeling a bit rough? Get to work. Coughing contagiously or need to be close to a bathroom? Offer to work from home, sending regular emails to prove you're not watching *The Jeremy Kyle Show*. Knocking on death's door? Skype your boss to show them how poorly you are.

## Winner or WHINER?

Yes, you worked 14 hours yesterday. And yes, your boss called you at 8pm to rewrite that report, which you turned around at super speed. Boo hoo. No one gives a flying monkey about your tough week. Want a promotion? You're *meant* to work hard. The big cheeses have worked their bums off before – that's why they're the bosses. Now it's your turn. **GET A PROMO PRONTO** Suck it up and go through your job description. Add anything extra you do to it and flag it up to your boss to prove you're ready for an upgrade. And if you're still not happy, maybe it's time to look for a new job.

## RUTHLESS won't cut it

Get the post/make the tea/congratulate that other girl on a job well done? As if. You're a promotion machine that'll crush anyone or any menial task that gets in

your way! FYI you're also terrifying. No matter how many boxes you tick, your boss is still going to be subjective when it comes to hiring. If no one likes you, you can kiss your promo goodbye.

**GET A PROMO PRONTO** "The best bit of advice I was ever given is to have other people doing your PR when you're not there," David reveals. Be assertive. Offer to pick up lunch for someone who's busy. Congratulate your biggest rival on her presentation (without sneering). Give other people a chance to have a say in meetings with your big boss.

## RECESSION-PROOF YOUR ROLE

Sadly, the big reason behind your lack of promotion could be the economic climate. People are losing jobs rather than advancing in them – experts predict the unemployment rate could reach 2.85 million by the end of 2012.\* Gulp. But there are ways to help save your career:

**1** Are your current skills transferable to another kind of office or career? Is there something you've always wanted to do – from accountant to florist? Do your homework and train up in your plan B career now. If you want to be an aerobics instructor, swap Saturday shopping for step-tap-step training.

**2** Offer to take on more responsibility. In a tough climate, employers need to get maximum return (ie, work) for their investment.

**3** The thought of losing your job is stressful, but it's harder to get rid of someone who constantly boosts morale. Wipe away those tears, smile and make tea. Stay positive.

**4** Get your thinking cap on. Bosses will pick solutions over a problem, so if you've got an idea that'll save your ass/your team's ass/the whole darn company's ass, share it.

**5** Prioritise. You want to take on everything to show how multi-talented and irreplaceable you are, but make sure you can do it all. **f**