



"3 Commonalities of Successful Professionals"

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There are, no doubt, people who you have had the good fortune of working with and/or come into contact with throughout your life who have truly excelled at their craft and built successful careers. What do they have in common? How have they successfully carved out careers that are satisfying, rewarding and fulfilling? These are the individuals who have effectively identified, created and articulated their **personal brand** and gone on to accomplish great things. We all know people like this in our own circles and there are a few good examples of public figures whom we all know such as; Bill Gates, Sonia Sotomayer, Albert Einstein, Oprah Winfrey, Tom Brady and Vera Wang to name a few.

What do they all have in common? Three things: they know what they have to offer; they know what they want; and they know how to ask for it!

Three Commonalities of Successful Professionals:

1. Know what they have to offer -

- Value-add and how they contribute to make a difference
- Differentiators; what sets them apart from their colleagues
- Worth; talents and strengths they possess, areas in which they excel
- Accomplishments and achievements; stories of success
- Unique characteristics, traits and skills
- Passions, motivations and values that drive them

2. Know what they want -

- Vision, mission and objectives for their career
- Goal-oriented; long term aspirations and short term expectations
- Execution plan for how they will achieve these goals

- Action plan and accountability for on-going review and follow through
- Focused, purposeful and driven
- Belief and faith in self to pursue and complete

3. Know how to ask for it -

- Advocate effectively for themselves
- Articulate clear and concise message
- Build and nurture long lasting relationships
- Create strategic alliances
- Offer their expertise, give back and serve as a resource to others
- Exude confidence with humility

Many professionals may excel at one or two of these areas, but to manage a successful and fulfilling career, we want to be able to achieve all three in order to 'own our career'. It begins and ends with self-awareness and inner strength, tapping into our utmost aspirations, desires and potential. It's all about empowering ourselves - being in the driver's seat rather than sitting in the back going along for the ride as an observer.

Take the time to do the required personal due diligence in order to create your plan and stay true to yourself. The result will ensure that when you tell your story, you come across as confident, authentic, focused and self-directed. Own *your* career - know what you have to offer, know what you want and know how to ask for it! Enjoy the journey!

Rita Balian Allen is the president of Rita B. Allen Associates, a national career management firm specializing in executive coaching, leadership development, management training and career development. She is a lecturer at Boston-area universities, a sought-after speaker and presenter, the author of numerous articles, blogs and the book, *"Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself: The Three Ps Marketing Technique as a Guide to Career Empowerment"*. Rita was voted one of the top ten executive coaches by the Boston Women's Business Journal.