



COVID-19 Career Strategies:

“The Visible Woman”

by

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Introduction

Essence Magazine recently conducted a survey and reported the following impacts of COVID-19 on women:

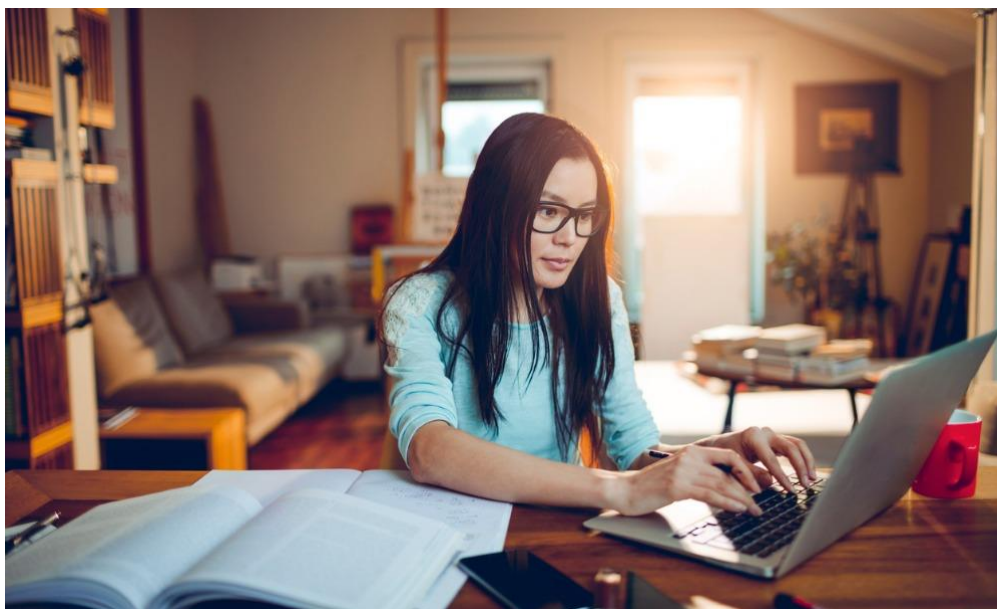
- 64% said their emotional well-being has been negatively impacted
- 63% said their mental health has been negatively impacted
- 50% said their ability to work has been negatively impacted

I'm sure you can relate to at least one of these statistics as you reflect on what's transpired with your career during the last 3-6 months. Please know that I COMPLETELY understand why managing your career has taken a back seat! Not only are you feeling as though there aren't enough hours in a day, as an employee your mind is constantly being bombarded with issues such as:

- Social isolation
- Child care/homeschooling
- Productivity
- Work/life balance
- Health (yours as well as your family) AND THAT'S NOT ALL!!

While working remotely certainly has its advantages, women have expressed concerns regarding their visibility (or lack thereof). This eGuide offers options for increasing your visibility through simple communication strategies and includes 4 sections: Raise Your Voice, Communication Mistakes, Marketing Me and Speak Up!

The goal isn't to complete every activity; the goal is to dedicate 15 min on actions you can implement that lead to increased visibility.



Raise Your Voice

When I realized how common it is for women to do the work in absence of advocating for themselves, I knew I had to do something. I decided to create a solution that would be both accessible and affordable in the form of a complimentary course called “Ditch The Downplay.” ([access course here](#))

It’s not enough to do the work and think someone will promote you. Should you take that approach, you - like so many of my clients - will experience frustration and disappointment. Leaders aren’t mind readers; they weren’t prior to the stay at home orders and they definitely aren’t now!

Although the medium of communication has changed (in-person vs virtual), you’ll still need to consistently check-in with your leader. Now, more than ever, you’ll not only need to communicate your wins and your goals, but you’ll also need feedback as everything is rapidly changing. Organizational priorities 90 days ago have probably shifted, and you should definitely be aware of: what they are, why they’ve changed as well as what you can do to demonstrate leadership where you are, in your role.

True or false:

- I communicate my wins and goals to my leader. _____
- I’ve solicited feedback within the last 30 days from my leader. _____
- I am aware of organizational priorities and my performance expectations.



Communication Mistakes To Avoid

Based on my research and experience, I've compiled what I believe are 10 of the most common communication mistakes women make. Be aware of the following as you "raise your voice":

1. Not taking credit. Women are typically reluctant to stand up and take credit for what they've accomplished, achieved and initiated
2. Taking things personally and allowing your emotions to influence what you say
3. Not negotiating effectively for what you deserve
4. Failing to communicate with credibility
5. Interrupting others
6. Failing to ask probing questions
7. Giving up power with your words (*"This might be a dumb idea"*)
8. Using shrinkers such as "I think" or "just" (*"I'm just a [insert title]"*)
9. Failing to challenge "authority" (perceived power due to seniority or influence)
10. Failing to respond with strategy or facts

How many of these mistakes are you currently making? _____

What needs to change? _____



“Marketing Me”

No one can communicate your career story and significant results better than you. I recommend that you manage your career like a business, not only in this climate but consistently in any climate. A SWOT Analysis is no stranger to employers and it really shouldn't be for you as an employee. On the next page, reflect upon the following so you can: experience clarity, strategically position yourself to become more visible and communicate confidently.

- **Strengths:** Know what your strengths are and how your efforts contribute to the organization's strategy - both short term and long term so you can communicate effectively at the appropriate times.
- **Weaknesses:** Be aware of the limitations that work against your career success so you can create a plan to diminish them.
- **Opportunities:** Consider external factors you can capitalize on that will increase your visibility. For example, if employee engagement has plummeted, what's your solution for increasing engagement? If you've identified communication gaps that are hindering productivity and efficiency, what will you do to streamline communication and improve the process?
- **Threats:** Take a moment to reflect on: what has happened, what is happening and what could potentially happen with your role as well as with your organization.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Opportunities:

Threats:



Speak Up!

Here's a list of communication strategies that can increase your visibility:

- Speak up or present during meetings
- Communicate directly with specifics #NoMindReading
- Be fully present; listen attentively to what is or isn't said then ask probing questions
- Communicate your expertise and performance results
- Mention your accomplishments relevant to the conversation. For example, instead of saying "I'm a Project Manager 5", you could say: *"While working on the _____ initiative, I was responsible for deploying _____ successfully as a Project Manager 5....."*

Which communication strategy will position you to raise your voice in way you haven't previously? #PowHerMoves

Partner with Ericka to manage your career during COVID-19

Career Mentor/ 1:1 Coaching: [click here or contact Ericka directly](#)

Additional Notes:

Who is Ericka Spradley?



Ericka Spradley is an enthusiastic expert in the Career Coaching industry known for partnering with organizations to prepare and position talent for the next level in their career. In addition, she assists individual clients who want to go further faster by advancing and better managing their careers. As the Chief PowHer Officer of Confident Career Woman, she is: an experienced Coach, Author, Interview Trainer, former Hiring Manager and Career Readiness Adjunct Professor who exists to help organizations improve their bottom line through talent retention and professional development. With 80% of her coaching clients landing their dream job, her transformative results with individual clients include:

- Developing a career strategy that elevates their career and helps them achieve career success
- Providing clarity where blind spots and the unknown exists to reveal their competitive advantage; offering ongoing support and advice (Career Mentor)
- Identifying transferrable skills that create broader career options
- Interview mastery combined with confidence so they secure their “next level” position

Ericka has a BA in Management with a Concentration in Human Resources as well as an Interviewing Certificate from the University of TX at Austin. These educational and workplace experiences combined with well over a decade of leadership experience as a Hiring Manager uniquely positions her to provide clients with the relevant knowledge needed to advance and maximize their careers.

Partnering Organizations/Seen In

