

# Profile of Success: Nancy Ancowitz, Author of “Self-Promotion for Introverts”

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Business communication coach Nancy Ancowitz, a former marketing vice president at JP Morgan Chase & Co., tells you how to determine if you’re an introvert and how to promote yourself to success.

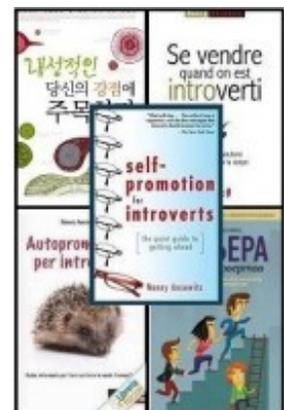
Check out her top tips for women introverts in the financial services industry and beyond!

## **Q: What made you write a book on self-promotion?**

**A:** For more than 10 years, I’ve been dedicated to raising awareness that introverts are vital contributors to our society who can thrive in their careers using their quiet strengths. Readers of my book and blogs benefit from visibility raising tools and techniques I’ve distilled from my years on Wall Street and from running my own businesses. My goal is to help my fellow introverts build strong professional networks, become powerful public speakers, answer tough questions at business meetings adeptly, ace job interviews and salary negotiations, and create action plans to help them get the recognition they deserve. The tips in my book— the first of its kind — help introverts and extroverts understand one another and work better together, often using complementary strengths.

## **Q: How can someone determine if they’re, in fact, an introvert?**

**A:** A quick-and-dirty method is to ask yourself where you draw your energy most of the time: Is it from quiet activities like reading books, conducting research, and having deep one-on-one conversations? Or are you more of a social butterfly who loves the structure of those open offices that are the bane of many an introvert’s work life? I learned that I was an introvert by taking the MBTI® assessment while I was a marketing vice president at a major Wall Street firm. I found the results enlightening, giving context to the way I relate to the world. While I’m not shy, I strongly prefer one-on-one conversations to the distractions and interruptions that are common in large group meetings, which drain me. So even though I enjoy people (in doses!), I get my energy more from my quiet time than from my social time.



## **Q: Although introverts can thrive in any work environment, you stated that it’s about knowing what works for you. How would someone first getting involved in the financial services industry determine this?**

**A:** For newcomers to the financial world, I strongly recommend going on informational interviews—meetings with people in the field you’re interested in. Ask them what succeeds and fails in their work environment. Ask them about their own career journey, and their sense

of what it's like for introverts and extroverts where they work. If you hit it off, ask to shadow them for a day. That's how I learned, early on in my career, that I didn't want to become a financial adviser.

In my life after Wall Street, as a business communication coach and speaker, I've had the pleasure of working with a wide range of financial professionals—traders, hedge fund managers, marketing people, CPAs, and IT professionals. Based on that experience, I'm convinced that you can thrive in any position as an introvert if you know yourself, play to your strengths, and create a playbook of activities—what to do and say as well as what to avoid—that works well for you. I've had introvert clients who love to cold call and who manage large teams, as well as those who prefer to work alone. Find what works for you.

**Q: What are some key self-promotion tips for FWA members and non-members who are introverts to advance in their careers?**

**A:** Prepare. Preparation is vital for you as an introvert because you do best by thinking through what you're going to say to avoid being put on the spot. This is important in many arenas, including business meetings, job interviews, negotiations, and presentations.

One indispensable item to prepare is your elevator pitch. While this has become a time-worn topic, there are still very few people who do a great job at it. If your succinct answer to “So, tell me about yourself” isn't compelling to your target audience, improve it right away. This is especially important for you as an introvert because you're better at composing your thoughts during your quiet time than on the spot. So take the time to craft and edit a few strong sentences that you can use to introduce yourself. Of course, vary what you say depending on whom you're speaking to.

Practice. Out loud. Why out loud? It sounds different from in your head! Video is a fantastic tool for this—it really helps you see and hear how you come across. Friends who are willing to sit still for a while and give constructive feedback can be a plus too. Speaking of how you come across, be mindful of the volume and pace of your voice. If you're an introvert who speaks softly and slowly, consider what you need to alter to be effective for different audiences. At the very least, be sure to enunciate well.

Rest up. It's important to recharge your social energy so you arrive at any kind of social gathering—whether it's a networking event or a business meeting—fully charged. For introverts, this usually means getting enough rest beforehand. For long events such as conferences, which can be overwhelming for introverts, take any opportunity to ditch the crowds and catch your breath—whether it's a quick jaunt around the block, or even an elevator ride! For office holiday parties, consider showing your face without trying to stay too long.

**Q: Why are public speaking skills so important?**

**A:** In a nutshell, “the ability to communicate both in writing and orally is enormously important.” Perhaps that statement will carry more weight if I share the source. When I was researching my book, I attended a Berkshire Hathaway annual meeting and had the great fortune to ask

Warren Buffett to share some advice to help introverts advance in their careers. His response included that statement, and his advice was to learn public speaking as early as you can in your career; he lamented that it's not taught enough in schools.

The bad news: Public speaking is an almost universal fear for introverts and extroverts alike. The good news: If you can push outside your comfort zone, it doesn't take long to get good at it. At New York University and client organizations where I offer workshops, I make public speaking accessible by breaking it down into concrete skills, including eye contact, hand gestures, posture, vocal variety, and creating clean, simple visuals. I can attest that the progress I see after only a few weeks of practice is often quite moving. If you have the opportunity to take a course or get some coaching in public speaking, it's well worth the temporary discomfort. Buffett told an amusing story about registering for a Dale Carnegie course in public speaking and then stopping the check; the next time he made sure to pay cash—and the rest is history!

**Q; How has being involved with the FWA affected your life?**

**A:** It's been a delight contributing to the vibrant [FWA community](#), with its talented, smart, and thoughtful women and men. I'm so glad that Shoya Zichy, the acclaimed author of *Personality Power*, urged me to join several years ago. It's been meaningful to collaborate with some incredibly special individuals and to build relationships that will continue to blossom. I've enjoyed giving talks at the FWA on topics I'm passionate about—career advancement for introverts and public speaking—all aligned with the FWA's mission to accelerate success and leadership for its members.

To read Ms. Ancowitz's interview featured in the Huffington Post, [click here](#).