

# 3 work habits holding you back

## The key to overcoming silent career killers

By Penny Walker, ASU News  
August 22, 2025

**Editor's note:** This story was featured in the [fall 2025 issue of ASU Thrive](#).

By May Busch

Have you ever worked hard, done a great job and still been overlooked for the next big opportunity?

Sometimes, it's not the obvious obstacles that stall your career. It's the silent habits we don't even realize are holding us back.

Over my 24 years in corporate life, including 10 promotions, and now as an executive coach, I have seen three habits that quietly derail even the most capable professionals. The good news? Once you spot them, you can shift them.

### 1. Flying under the radar

Doing great work is important, but assuming it will speak for itself is a mistake. I learned this the hard way when a promotion I expected didn't come to fruition. My boss backed me, but when he took my case to the committee of other company leaders at the senior director level, no one else knew who I was. That was enough to sink it.

Whether you're early in your career or leading teams, visibility and timing matter just as much as ability.

Make your work known to others in the company. Speak up in meetings. Say "yes" before you feel completely ready. Keep key stakeholders in the loop. Try a weekly update email with three bullet points: what you achieved, what's in motion and what's next.

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### 2. Neglecting relationships that could move you forward

It's easy to focus on tasks and leave relationship building for later. However, when you wait until you need something, it's often too late.

From building trust with your boss to staying in touch with mentors, sponsors and peers, you rise faster when people know you, trust you and want to advocate for you.

As your career advances, it's no longer just about what you can do alone. Success increasingly depends on collaboration, support and being part of the right circles — both inside and outside your organization.

Incorporate relationship building into your schedule. This doesn't have to become a large investment or the need to take on big new projects at work. It could simply be getting to a meeting early to chat as people arrive or showing up to an event you might have skipped. Send a link to an article or be more present when speaking with colleagues.

### **3. Letting limiting beliefs shape your decisions**

Limiting beliefs are the internal stories that hold us back. They might sound like:

“I'm not ready yet.”

“They probably already have someone in mind.”

“Someone like me wouldn't get that opportunity.”

“I don't have anything interesting to say.”

Negative beliefs about yourself can hinder you not just in your life, but in your career too. In the early days of my career, my belief that, “I'm not as good as everyone else,” kept me from speaking up in meetings and taking on bigger responsibilities.

It's only by identifying those limiting beliefs that you can replace them with something more empowering — and accurate.

Name it to change it. Notice where you feel stuck or hesitant. That's often where a limiting belief is hiding. Identify it, challenge it and make a new choice.

### **Habits can be changed**

I still remember how it felt to be passed over for that promotion — I had done everything right, or so I thought. But doing great work quietly wasn't enough.

That experience taught me a powerful lesson: Success isn't just about effort. It's also about being seen, connecting with people throughout your organization and believing you belong.

You can shift your habits — and move your career forward. Now that you know how to spot these three common habits that silently stall careers, you can start replacing them with strategic, career-advancing ones.

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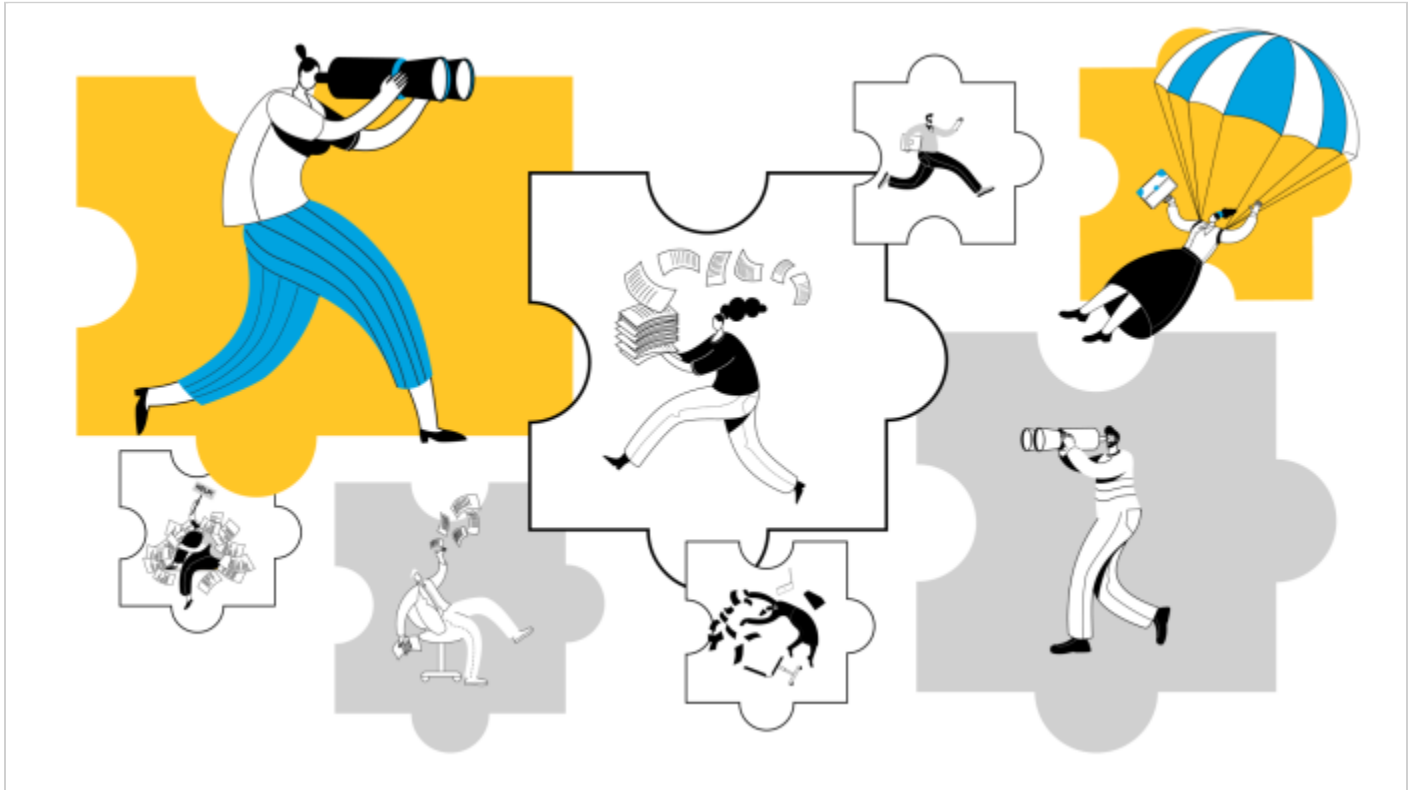
## About the author

[May Busch](#), a former COO of Morgan Stanley Europe, is now an executive coach, speaker, advisor, author and executive-in-residence in ASU's Office of the President.

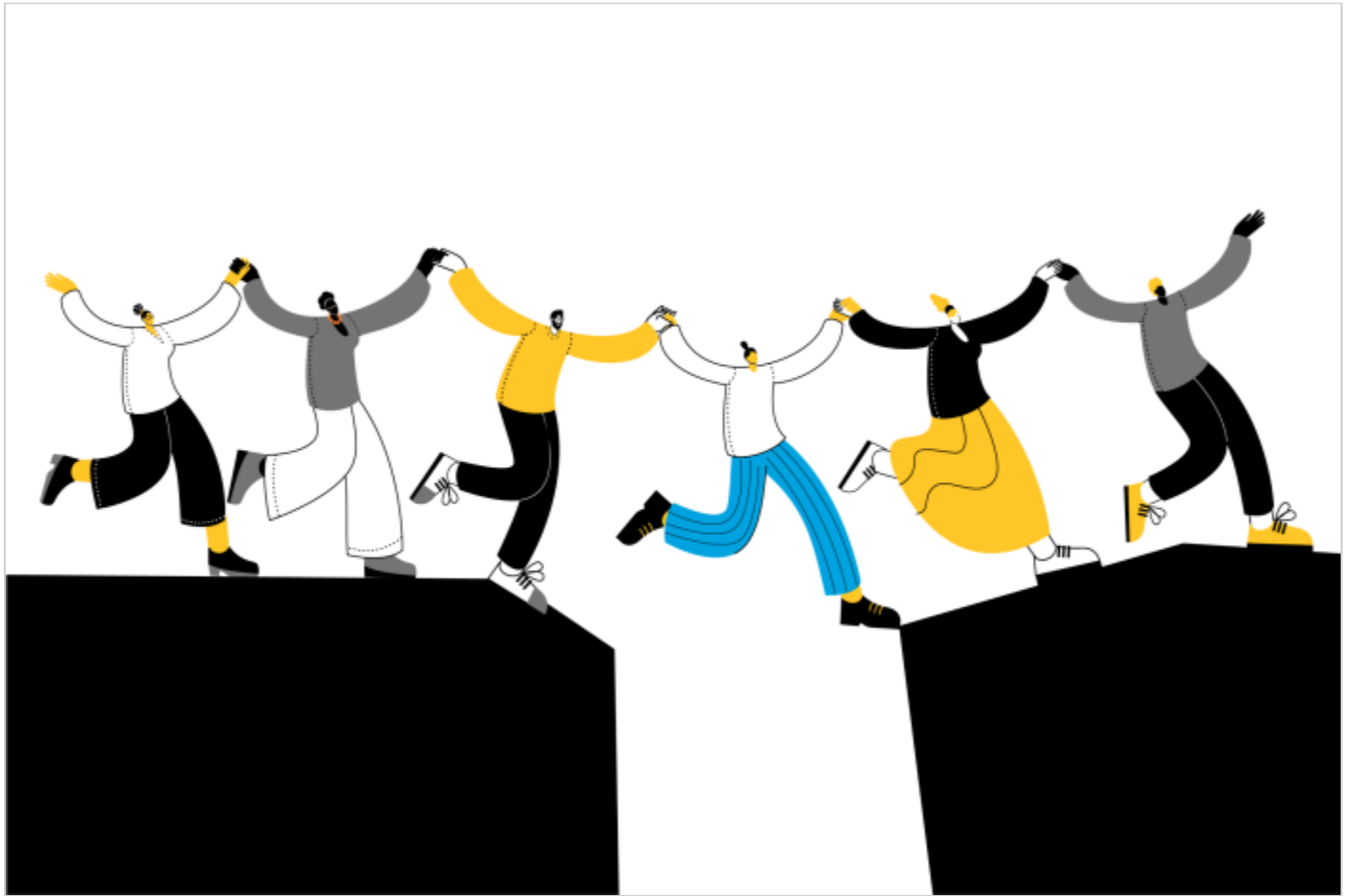
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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



## Text image(s)



“As your career advances, it’s no longer just about what you can do alone,” says May Busch, executive-in-residence in ASU’s Office of the President.