Developing your Executive Presence
Student Guide
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Session One: Course Overview

Course Overview

Some people immediately command attention and respect when they walk into a room. Do you have that kind of presence? If not, is it something that you would like to develop? This one-day workshop will help you do just that by building your credibility, improving your personal appearance, honing your networking skills, and enhancing your ability to communicate effectively. You will also receive an introduction to core leadership skills.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

- Identify the elements of a strong executive presence
- Build trust and credibility with others
- Communicate effectively using verbal and non-verbal techniques
- Create a strong, positive first impression and maintain that impression as you build a relationship with others
- Develop key leadership skills, including techniques for coaching, motivating, and delivering feedback

Personal Objectives

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Session Two: Managing Your First Impression

Being Confident

A major part of projecting your executive image is confidence. Confidence is not just about how you feel; it affects how you look. Luckily, we have several techniques that you can apply in order to gain confidence.

Pretend You’re Confident

Imagine yourself to be a confident person. Get that image in your mind and act it out. Stand up straight, dress better, and try to play the part. If you visualize yourself as confident and successful, that will help you to do things confidently and project a powerful image. When you feel your confidence slipping, visualize and use positive words to build yourself up.

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.

When Your Positive Self-Talk Doesn’t Listen

Sometimes we can be so hard on ourselves that we will actually argue with that voice in our head and therefore can’t get the positive message track to enter our consciousness. One helpful way of breaking this pattern is to interfere with it. When you catch yourself listening to negative self-talk, play music that inspires you and sing or hum along. It is much more difficult for those negative messages to persist through music. The music can also be the positive message that you need at that time.

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.
Make Eye Contact

Confident people look people in the eye; people who aren’t confident don’t, unless it is a cultural restriction. Don’t stare or make people uncomfortable; find that comfortable level of engaging in eye contact. (In some cultures it can be considered rude to look people directly in the eye. Make sure that you know your audience.)

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.

Dance

While this one might get you gasping (for confidence and air!), dancing is a great way to build yourself up. First, we know that the benefits of physical exercise are great, but did you ever think to let yourself go within a class of other likeminded people who are all learning at the same time? Often, you can take a class or two before you have to pay the fee. Then you can decide whether you are more of a salsa, flamenco, or ballroom kind of person.

If you don’t have a partner, don’t worry because lots of times there are other dancers there on their own. Or, you can take a class in line dancing. Whichever you decide, dance (or even yoga or guitar lessons) will force you to focus on something that you can enjoy.

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.
Know Your Stuff

Your confidence can’t be all a front. While you are looking people directly in the eyes, standing straight, and otherwise acting as if the world were your oyster, you also have to know what you are doing. If you are prepared and sure of your facts, you’ve got a better chance of projecting confidence. Later on in this course, we’ll talk about effective presentation skills and effective leadership skills.

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.

Rehearse

Rehearsing can be as simple as writing out a speech or your intended conversation with someone and practicing it in front of the mirror. For example, you could do a role-play with a trusted friend or colleague as the interviewer before you interview for a new position. To tackle your underlying fear of failure, include imagery with your rehearsal: imagine yourself succeeding.

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.

Pep Talks Work

Rather than dwell on the things that didn’t work or the things that didn’t go well, focus on what you did accomplish. Give yourself a mental pep talk at the beginning or the end of every day. Remind yourself that you have done some things well.

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.
Read Inspiring Biographies and Autobiographies

Build a file of stories that inspire you most. Remember that our capacity far exceeds our usual level of performance. Accept the fact you will have ups and downs just like everyone else. Experiencing them through reading will help reinforce that concept.

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.

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Be Thankful

No matter how bad your circumstances, there is probably somebody worse off than you. As well, build excellent support around you. There are a lot of tremendous people out there to spend your valuable time with. However, relationships are fragile. You must be prepared to devote some time to them.

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.

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Push Yourself to Accomplish Short-Term Goals

There is no greater way to build confidence than to get things done. Push yourself to get at least three things accomplished each week that move you closer to your goals. Develop a habit of getting things done and being productive.

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.
Do Something for Yourself Every Week

You deserve it. Find a way to celebrate what you have accomplished or overcome. Give yourself some kind of tangible reward for your efforts.

Consider how to implement this technique in order to break away from old habits and establish productive patterns.
Dressing for Success

Introduction

The way you look is what people see first. Your appearance, as well as your level of confidence when you walk into a room, are the basis for their opinion about you before you even have the chance to speak. No matter what type of work you do, your image needs to support that, not contradict it. Since the 1980’s, and particularly in North America, there has been an acceptance of wearing blue jeans as part of the corporate uniform. Fridays in particular became “casual day” when all employees could wear blue jeans or casual wear. This push for casual wear has changed the way many workplaces look today. CEOs dress in suits and ties in some companies, and in T-shirts and sandals in others.

No matter what clothing you select to help you create an impact when you enter a room or meet someone new, there are a few rules. We refer to these as Seven Factors for Success.

Factor One: Iron

Clothing needs to be clean and free of wrinkles. Get rid of that rumpled college or “just rolled out of bed” look. Learn how to use an iron and use it regularly.

Factor Two: Grab a Needle and Thread

Buttons, zippers, and other fasteners need to be properly attached to your clothing to give you a polished look.

Factor Three: Footwear

People notice what your feet are wearing, too. Your shoes need to be clean and in good condition. Learn how to apply shoe polish and purchase good quality footwear. You can lessen your credibility significantly with a nice outfit and a poor looking pair of shoes.

Factor Four: Hair

Your hair needs to be clean (even if the style of your mop is a messy one). No one wants to be around the smell of dirty hair, and some styles really trap smell.
Factor Five: Teeth

Your teeth need to be clean. You don’t have to follow the trend of whitening and braces for adults, but your smile is founded on your teeth, and they need to be well looked after in order to support your image. Getting your teeth cleaned regularly also helps to keep your breath fresh.

Factor Six: Dressing Up

Dress for the position that you want and the respect you are after. If everyone around you wears baggy shorts and skater shoes because you sell skateboards, that’s one thing. If you work in a design company, an art gallery, or a jewelry manufacturer, you will probably dress differently than members of a law firm. If you want to have an impact, you still need to dress well wherever you are. Look carefully through your wardrobe and select clothes that will serve you.

Factor Seven: Glasses and Accessories

Long-time glasses wearers have a gift for being able to look through a pair of smudged or dirty lenses, but others will notice that layer of grime. Keep a microfiber cloth handy to keep your glasses clean. Pay attention to watches, cuff links, and jewelry with the same attention to detail.

Making Connections

What kind of image do you wish to create (or have you already created) to support your executive presence?

What changes are you prepared to make?
The Professional Handshake

The Importance of a Handshake

Once you’ve made a positive first impression, it’s important to follow it through. During the important first few minutes of a new relationship, a handshake is usually the only body contact between two people. It can communicate warmth, a genuine concern for the other person, and an image of either strength or gentleness. It can also communicate indifference and weakness. Developing a professional handshake is perhaps one of the most valuable business skills you can ever cultivate.

Five Factors

The message you communicate with your handshake is determined by five factors.

Degree of Firmness
Your grip should be firm, rather than weak. However, you don’t want your handshake to be painful to the other person. Consideration is appreciated. Be especially considerate if you are shaking hands with someone in a receiving line who has many more hands to shake, someone who is wearing a lot of rings, or someone who is obviously elderly and perhaps fragile.

Dryness of Hand
We all prefer to shake a hand that is dry. While you typically don’t want to obviously dry your hands before greeting someone, this is perfectly acceptable if you have been holding a cold glass.

Depth of Grip
A handshake is palm to palm. Generally you will place your hand so that the web between your thumb and forefinger meets the web of the other person’s hand, briefly. Your hand remains perpendicular. If your palm is facing up, this may be construed as a sign of submissiveness. Similarly, if your palm is on top, it can be seen as a sign of aggressiveness.

Duration of Grip
The perfect handshake is about three seconds. You can gently pump once or twice but this is not necessary. Then pull back your hand, even if you are still talking.
Eye Contact
While this will vary from culture to culture, in North America we expect the person shaking our hand to make eye contact with us.

Tips for Success
Have something to say as you shake hands, if possible. It doesn’t require anything witty. It may even be the old stand-by, “Pleased to meet you.” However, these few words set the stage for some small talk and are a great start to building trust.

Grasping the top of the other person’s hand with your other hand, so that their hand is enveloped in yours, may very well signal warmth and affection. However, this may be seen as patronizing and too familiar for an introductory handshake. Save this handshake for a meeting with an old friend.
Remembering Names

Why Name Recall is an Important Skill

There are several techniques for remembering people’s names, and the key is to use whatever works for you. You may find that a particular technique works in some instances (like when you also get a business card) but not in others (especially if you are in more casual surroundings). Most people love to hear their own name, and when someone new to us remembers our name, it makes us pay attention.

Avoid the temptation to say that you are horrible at remembering names. This can give off two not-so-subtle messages:
- You are not important, and therefore I won’t make an effort to remember your name.
- I don’t care if I ever meet you again or not.

Instead, make a conscious decision to get good at learning names. If you do not have a great track record for remembering names, let that change now. Stop telling people (and yourself!) that you never remember names. Plant the idea in your subconscious that you are fantastic at remembering names and you remember people all the time!

Repeat Their Name

When you meet someone new, repeat their name out loud, and look into their eyes as you do so to connect them to their name. If you can repeat the name, the likelihood of remembering it increases tremendously.

Try questions like:
- “Did I pronounce it correctly?”
- “Could you repeat your name for me?”
- “How do you spell your name?”

Sometimes we are talking with people but very distracted and we aren’t even trying to remember their name. Instead, focus on the person or people you are speaking with, and then repeat their name within the conversation. For example: “Susan, it’s nice to meet you. What do you think of this subject?”

When Susan answers, use her name in your reply, like this: “It’s great to hear what other people are thinking about that, Susan. I’m curious to hear what you think is the most challenging part of this topic.”
Be sure to use their name at the end of your conversation. For example, “Susan, it was a pleasure to meet you today.”

**Write It Down**

This is a great technique used by sales people, and it’s available for the rest of us too! When you meet someone, write their name down as soon as you can, along with a trigger to help remind you who they are. You can do this in a paper or electronic notebook. Keep a list of new people that you meet and then review it from time to time. This is really helpful when you start a new job and are meeting lots of people, move into a new neighborhood, or when you are consciously networking. As well, try to tie the name to something memorable.

Here are some examples:
- “Sandra, makes her own jewelry, always wears at least two pieces.”
- “Maryanne, fashion consultant, wears various shades of purple (clothes and hair).”
- “Thomas, avid numismatist, looking for a 1982 Canadian penny.”
- “Gabriel, horse rancher and entrepreneur. Promised that I would send him photo of our racing horse.”

When you are at a meeting or conference and meeting lots of people, have a page set up to record names. When you meet someone new, add them to your list on that page along with your description. At the end of the day, review the list and recall each person’s face so that you are matching them together in your memory.

**Spell It Out**

Playing with the spelling of someone’s name is a good way to help it stick in your memory. Have them spell their name for you, simply by asking, “How do you spell your name?” This gives you time to register their name again, and then once more as you repeat the letters back to them. Don’t worry if this feels a bit awkward or silly. If you genuinely want to learn someone’s name, they typically appreciate it.

As you write down or speak each letter, imagine it moving just a little. It might bounce or shake a bit, but whatever move you have it do will help it click into your memory. You could also picture yourself writing it on an old fashioned blackboard, or painting it on a billboard above their photo.
Word Play

Use mnemonic devices to connect people to their names. Things like “Charles from church” or “Neil from Newark” can be very helpful.

Confess!

If you recognize someone and have forgotten their name, admit it. We have a lot of stimulus around us all the time. As well, some events are terrible for noise and distractions. Avoid being embarrassed and just be honest and say, “It’s been great to talk with you. I can’t believe it, but I have forgotten your name.” The knowledge that you are making the effort to connect usually makes this only a minor problem.

Are there other techniques you would like to add to this list?
Building Trust and Credibility

We’ve probably all worked with people (including leaders and executives) that we did not respect. No matter how long we worked with them, and no matter how great our results were, there was something about them which stopped us from trusting them. This lack of respect leads to dysfunctional teams, where people are afraid of repercussions. When people work well with one another, and respect one another, trust is built.

Factors that impact your credibility and your ability to build this trust include small things (like remembering to think of people and send a thank you note) and big things (like being punctual). Credibility and trust are reinforced when people speak about you in a manner that reflects the regard they hold you in.

Earlier, we discussed ways to start building trust and credibility as soon as you walk into a room. Here are some additional techniques that you can use to further develop trusting relationships.

If you say you’ll do it, then get on and do it.

Some people are good at planning and setting things up, but not so good when it comes to the follow through. At some point, you have to stop talking and start doing. If details are not really your strong suit, then make sure that you have people you can delegate to so that the things you say you will do get done. If you break promises, any trust that people have in you will be swiftly eroded.

If you mess it up, own it.

We all make mistakes, and it’s a way to learn how to improve. Instead of pointing the finger at someone else (especially members of your team), make sure the blame falls where it belongs – on you. Leaders and people who want to have impact learn that accepting responsibility for the good and the bad builds trust and credibility.

Be there for people.

If people feel micro-managed, they feel that you do not trust them to do their own work. Strong leaders allow people to experiment, take risks, and to learn from failure as well as their own choices. Remember to also see what their strengths are and to celebrate when they do things well. Don’t try to take credit when the whole team is contributing to success. As well, make sure that you are available when they need your support.
**Be assertive.**

Although this is something that varies culturally and even within industries, you’ve got to be prepared to stand up for the things you believe in. You must also develop tools to manage conflict and to solve problems. If everyone that you work with seems accepting of everything you do and say, chances are that they are afraid of telling you the truth about how they really feel. Encourage sharing of opinions, debate, and discussion as a way for everyone to learn and grow.

**Be yourself.**

Developing a powerful presence and having a personal impact on the things that you do does not mean that you become someone else in public. Be accepting of who you are (including your strengths and weaknesses) and commit to ongoing development so that you can be the best person you can be.

**Are there other things you would like to add to this list?**

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________________________________________________________________________
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Session Three: Interpersonal Communication Skills

Making Connections

Write down the names of three people that you consider good listeners.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Did you write down the name of a person that you do not like?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do any of the three people fit into one of these categories?
  o Someone you like
  o Someone you love
  o Someone you respect

If you wish to be liked, loved, or respected, how is it that you need to behave?

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________________________________________________________________________
Active Listening Skills

Active listening means that we try to understand things from the speaker’s point of view. It includes letting the speaker know that we are listening and that we have understood what was said. This is not the same as hearing, which is a physical process, where sound enters the eardrum and messages are passed to the brain. Active listening can be described as an attitude that leads to listening for shared understanding.

When we make a decision to listen for total meaning, we listen for the content of what is being said as well as the attitude behind what is being said. Is the speaker happy, angry, excited, sad...or something else entirely?

Responding to Feelings

The content (the words spoken) is one thing, but the way that people feel really gives full value to the message. Responding to the speaker’s feelings adds an extra dimension of listening. Are they disgusted and angry or in love and excited? Perhaps they are ambivalent! These are all feelings that you can reply to in your part of the conversation.

Reading Cues

Really listening means that we are also very conscious of the non-verbal aspects of the conversation.

- What are the speaker’s facial expressions, hand gestures, and posture telling us?
- Is their voice loud or shaky?
- Are they stressing certain points?
- Are they mumbling or having difficulty finding the words they want to say?

Demonstration Cues

When you are listening to someone, these techniques will show a speaker that you are paying attention, providing you are genuine in using them.

Physical indicators include making eye contact, nodding your head from time to time, and leaning into the conversation.

You can also give verbal cues or use phrases such as “Uh-huh,” “Go on,” “Really!” and, “Then what?”
You can use questions for clarification or summarizing statements. Examples:
- “Do you mean they were charging $4.00 for just a cup of coffee?”
- “So after you got a cab, got to the store, and found the right sales clerk, what happened then?”

**Tips for Becoming a Better Listener**

- **Make a decision to listen.** Close your mind to clutter and noise and look at the person speaking with you. Give them your undivided attention.
- **Don’t interrupt** people. Make it a habit to let them finish what they are saying. Respect that they have thoughts they are processing and speaking about, and wait to ask questions or make comments until they have finished.
- Keep your eyes focused on the speaker and your ears tuned to their voice. Don’t let your eyes wander around the room, just in case your attention does too.
- Carry a notebook or start a conversation file on your computer. Write down all the discussions that you have in a day. Capture the subject, who spoke more (were you listening or doing a lot of the talking?), what you learned in the discussion, as well as the who, what, when, where, why, and how aspects of it. Once you have conducted this exercise 8-10 times, you will be able to see what level your listening skills are currently at.
- Ask a few questions throughout the conversation. When you ask, people will know that you are listening to then, and that you are interested in what they have to say. Your ability to summarize and paraphrase will also demonstrate that you heard them.
- When you demonstrate good listening skills, they tend to be infectious. If you want people to communicate well at work, you have to set a high example.
Asking Open and Closed Questions

Effective communication means that we should be spending a lot of our time asking questions and providing answers. When it comes to asking, however, we often aren’t aware of our technique. Open questions in particular often give us difficulty, which is unfortunate since they are the most important ones for us to become skilled at using. If you are having trouble with open questions, it can be helpful to get more comfortable with small talk and easing yourself into the conversation at hand.

**Open Questions**

These are broad, general questions that require your conversation partner to provide more than just a “yes” or “no” answer. They also permit the other person to decide how much information to give.

Open questions can do the following:
- Give us more information
- Encourage your conversation partner to speak openly
- Encourage people to share opinions and ideas
- Help us determine if people have interpreted what we say accurately

**Closed Questions**

Closed questions can be answered with a single word or two, such as a simple yes or no. They can begin the closing process in a conversation, or provide confirmation of a detail, but they don’t usually lead to a richer conversation or gathering more information. The advantage of closed questions is that they give you control over the questions and the type of answers you receive. Closed questions are easy to interpret and more questions can be answered in less time.

However, closed questions don’t allow for detailed explanations or for the other person to share how they feel about a particular circumstance. If you wish to encourage a richer response or to encourage a frustrated person to talk freely, then you need to avoid asking closed questions.
**Making Connections**

Rephrase the following questions so that they are open instead of closed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closed Question</th>
<th>Open Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you like today’s conference?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t you think Mark’s suit is ugly?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you angry at Samantha yesterday?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a happy person?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you and Tara get along?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Probing Techniques

When we do not get enough information by using open-ended questions, we can use probes to expand the conversation. Here are a few probing techniques that you can use to get more information from people and build relationships.

Verbal and Nonverbal Probes

A probe will encourage your conversation partner to add to their previous response. Verbal probes are often a single word or short phrase. Some examples are:

- “Tell me more about that.”
- “That’s interesting. Tell me more.”
- “Really?”
- “Why?”
- “Can you give me a specific example of what you mean?”

Non-verbal probes rely on your body language and gestures to get the same results as a verbal probe. Some examples are:

- Raising the eyebrows as if you are surprised
- Nodding
- Frowning
- Pursing the lips

Probing Techniques

There are many ways that you can use probing in your conversations. We’ve provided some techniques for you below.

Ask an open question.

Some good questions include:

- “Can you describe that more clearly?”
- “Would you give me a specific example of what you mean?”
- “What do you think we should do?”

You’ll soon recognize that if you ask too many of these questions, your conversation partner will feel like they are under interrogation, so use them carefully.
Pause.
Many of us feel uncomfortable when silence overtakes a conversation, and we will fill the silence by expanding on what was said previously.

Use reflective or mirroring questions.
For example, if the employee says “I just don’t feel challenged by my work anymore,” you may respond by just reflecting back to them, “Challenged?” Then pause. Usually, the other person will provide you with an expanded answer without you asking more questions or interrogating. These kinds of statements also serve to focus or clarify and summarize without interrupting the flow of the conversation. They demonstrate your intent to understand the speaker’s thoughts and feelings.

Paraphrase.
Reflect what has just been said in your own words. “So if I understand you correctly, you...” This technique shows that you want to understand your conversation partner and that you want to be accurate. It also allows the sender to hear back what they have said from someone else’s point of view.

Use summary questions.
Summary questions are a helpful way of probing and winding up the conversation at the same time. “You have spoken to your colleague about his foul language in the office, you have tried to ignore it, and you remain concerned about the impact his swearing has on our visitors and staff. None of these techniques have worked to reduce the amount of swearing and now you are asking me to intervene. Have I got it right?”

Here is another example: when we asked an employee why it would take until next week to finish the project, one of her reasons was lack of cooperation from the production department.

Rather than come back with yet another question, you might just say “Cooperation...” in a reflective tone of voice, and pause again. Usually, the other person will recognize that reflection as a clue to expand or provide you with additional information.

Summary statements or paraphrases sum up what has been said, and will show that you have listened and absorbed what’s being said. Don’t use them to take over the dialogue.

The summary is the stronger cue that the conversation is winding down on that topic. However, if necessary or appropriate, you can follow this up with a fact-finding question (usually a closed question), such as, “Did you want to say more about the issue?”, or, “Do you have any other suggestions?”
Managing Your Body Language

Our bodies, especially our faces, do a lot of the talking for us. When you are having conversations, it’s important that you pay attention to what your body is saying and ensure that it is congruent with your words. When speaking with others, do you lean forward slightly to indicate that you are listening to them? Do you avoid the temptation to roll your eyes, even if you don’t believe what you are hearing?

Communication expert Mark Bowden reminds us that we need to speak in a way that people will perceive as trustworthy. This includes keeping gestures close to the body, as opposed to wildly gesticulating, and to keep your gestures in line with what Bowden calls the “truth plane.” This means that gestures are symmetrical and kept in front of the abdomen, not up at the chest or blocking your face.

Making Connections

List some examples of positive body language.

List some examples of negative body language.
Session Four: Speaking with Impact

What’s Your Sound?

Do you have a “phone voice”? This is the voice you always use when you answer the phone; there can be total chaos around you, but when you pick up the phone and say, “Good morning,” the caller hears calm professionalism.

In contrast is the voice we use on the street or at the market. Some of us have grown up using what we might call “street language,” or language that is commonly spoken with friends outside of the workplace. In business, however, we want to be clearly understood and so we apply a veneer or polish to our language. Sometimes a vocal or image coach will teach you to drop your street language so that it stops creeping into your business conversations and so that we are more easily understood.

When it comes to how you sound, you have to make a decision based on what’s important to you and the image you want to project. Does your accent create a barrier in some way? If not, there is no need to change it. But if your accent prevents people from understanding you, or if your street language is having a negative impact on your communication skills, then it may be worth doing something about.

Do you have any examples of people using different speech in different venues? Does it have an impact on their desired presence?
Things to Consider

Here are some things to consider when evaluating your business voice:

- What’s your speech like?
- Do you have a position of authority and a very soft speaking voice? Is it helping you?
- Or, do you work with a lot of soft-spoken people and speak to them in a booming, direct voice?
- Do people listen to you?
- Do they respect you?
- How is your voice supporting the image that you wish to project?
Redesigning Yourself for Strength

Can you imagine what it must be like in broadcasting school? What about being a voice for cartoons or reading audio books? These speakers have learned how to control their voices in order to capture the attention of a listener. By paying close attention to the following elements of voice, you will see the potential for making changes to your own voice and becoming a stronger, more confident speaker.

**Tone**

Tone refers to the way that you distinguish or inflect your words. We use tone to express emotion, emphasis, contrast, and other features of our speech. Your tone tells your audience how you are feeling about the words you say. Good intonation lets others see your attitude and your enthusiasm for your subject, and demonstrates that they are consistent.

Which do you prefer: monotonous or melodious? Do your words come out pleasant and energetic, or lifeless and wooden? Think in terms of friendliness and a desire to communicate with others and develop the best intonation that you can to captivate listeners to what you have to say.

**Pitch**

This refers to how high or low your voice is. In most cases a low-pitched voice is considered an asset. Men and women who have lower voices are considered more exciting, more credible, more sociable, and more relaxed. They are also generally easier to hear. If you have a high-pitched voice, be aware of it and consider how you can best deliver your message. If you have a high voice and will speak frequently, working with a vocal coach can be an excellent idea.

**Pacing**

Do you trudge like a turtle or race like a rabbit when you speak? If people cannot follow what you are saying, you’ll need to slow down. Speak too slowly, however, and your credibility can suffer. Fortunately, we can train ourselves to pause after a particularly dramatic statement, or after a question we want others to respond to. We can learn how to pick up the pace to create energy and to slow it down for heightened emphasis.
**Emphasis**

Emphasis changes the meaning of our words.
- I was born in Boston. (You, on the other hand, were born somewhere else.)
- I was born in Boston! (How dare you suggest otherwise!)
- I was born in Boston. (I wasn’t born nearby.)
- I was born in **Boston**. (I wasn’t born in Sydney or London or Bangor.)

**Facial Expressions**

The face conveys more messages to the listener than any other part of our body. **Positive aspects** include a smile, eye contact, relaxed facial muscles, and an alert expression. **Negative aspects** include rolling your eyes, frowning, glaring, smirking, or looking tense. If you are curious about what your face is revealing, videotape yourself while speaking and have a good look.

**Posture**

The way we stand conveys a lot about our level of confidence. A good posture (head up, shoulders back, both feet on the floor) says we are confident. Watch that you don’t sway, rock, or pace when you are speaking to others. Moving around can show how comfortable you are speaking, but if you pace back and forth across the room, you probably look nervous and your constant movement can be distracting.
Five Points for Any Presentation

It can be hard to remember to cover all of the bases while you’re speaking, particularly if you’re put on the spot. The five S approach will work for any size presentation. If you’re asked a question during an event, you can use this approach to provide a quick, complete answer. If you’re putting on a large presentation at a conference, you can use this approach as a framework. Either way, it will ensure that you tell the audience what they want to know and what they need to know.

The framework looks like this:

**Example**

I was drowning in clutter: too many clothes in my closet, too many books on my bookshelves, and too many pieces of furniture in my house. I didn’t have time for a yard sale. Besides, we live on a pretty quiet street without much traffic. However, I needed to get rid of things and I couldn’t bring myself to throw them out. So I bagged and boxed all the items I no longer wanted and I called a local charity. They came by with a truck and took everything away. They made money, I felt good, and my house was de-cluttered. If your possessions are starting to take over your life, I recommend calling This Charity at 000-0000.
Making Connections

Write down a short, two-paragraph speech about yourself or something that interests you.

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Now, get some feedback on your presentation.

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Session Five: Maintaining Your Impression

A Word About Business Etiquette

Having good manners doesn’t just mean you make a positive impression; they are also good for business. No matter how formal or informal you want your presence to be, people still care about social skills and manners (even if they don’t come out and say so). Rules about which fork to use for the salad, or not talking with food in your mouth, are examples of good manners. Etiquette, however, takes the discussion about manners to a higher level.

Emily Post, famous for her approach to etiquette, manners, and ethics, defined etiquette like this: “Whenever two people come together and their behavior affects one another, you have etiquette. Etiquette is not some rigid code of manners; it’s simply how persons’ lives touch one another.”

When you apply your awareness of etiquette in different situations, you demonstrate that you want to be taken seriously. You become an ambassador for what you do and who you work with.

Do you know how to conduct yourself in a restaurant? What about in a workshop where food is served? In a conference room?

Do you know how to offer your business card to people in your own industry? What about to people from other cultures? (There are different rules around the world, and your ability to apply your understanding will help to bolster your image.)

What are you willing to learn, and what changes are you willing to make, in order to become proficient in etiquette?
Making Connections

What are your top five networking tips?

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Networking Tips and Tricks

Networking is an effective way for you to build your image and reputation. However, building a network can be a difficult thing for a lot of people. If you are inhibited at all, the idea of introducing yourself to people can be daunting. If you are outgoing, people may have the impression that you just want to meet them to further your career or grow your business. The real purpose of networking, however, is that you bring something that is helpful to them (not you specifically) without expecting something directly in return.

For example, if you know someone who needs their house painted, and you know a painter, you could introduce the two. You do not gain directly from the referral, except that now it’s possible that the person you refer and the painter will both think of you when they have a need or a referral for you.

There are plenty of networking groups available to help you get out into your community and to get known. Building a network takes time and patience. If you are hoping to get business or recognition from a group, expect it to take a year or more. Your results will depend on how involved you are.

Here are some excellent tips to try as you start to build or expand upon your network:

- If you are a strong writer or teacher, you can write for a variety of media (such as local news, websites, and blogs). Just make sure your work is getting read and that it’s work you are proud of.
- If you enjoy presentations, then volunteer to sit on a panel or start looking for paid workshops and conference presentations.
- Get away from time wasters, such as water cooler gossip, or people who socialize excessively at work and are not getting things done. You don’t want to be associated with these people because they will not be a good reflection of your values.
- Spend time with mentors and coaches in the workplace that you can learn from, even if it’s just while sharing a meal or break together now and again.
Session Six: Three Leadership Skills to Start Mastering Right Now

Delivering Effective Feedback

Introduction

So far, we’ve talked about how to develop a great presence that speaks to people when you walk into a room, and continues speaking to them as you network, communicate, and build relationships. However, strong leaders in executive positions must be able to walk the walk in addition to talking the talk. This means identifying your weaknesses and strengths, and planning to address and improve them.

There are three key areas that we feel are crucial to any leader’s success, which we will share in this session. Let’s start by looking at the concept of feedback.

The Goal of Effective Feedback

By definition, effective feedback must contribute to an improvement in future performance. Even when it does not lead directly to a desired level of performance, the meeting itself provides the platform to discuss expectations, results, motivation, and how to succeed. It also shows others that you care and are willing to help them achieve their goals – which means that you, in turn, may be able to rely on their support one day.

When feedback is perceived to be negative (because of our own behavior, or perhaps because it is not well delivered), people will naturally try to avoid it, or at least minimize the negative effects. However, we need to let people know that it can be a great tool for personal development, especially when we include information on both the issues and the possible solutions.
**The Characteristics of Effective Feedback**

With this in mind, here are what we consider to be the six most important characteristics of effective feedback.

- **In Private**: Feedback should be given in private if your comments can be embarrassing. A formal feedback meeting should always be held in private.

- **Balanced**: Design your feedback session so that, even though there may be constructive criticism required, the person does not feel attacked, or that all you have to say about their work is negative.

- **Relevant**: Keep the conversation focused on feedback that is relevant and job related, and to things which the employee has control over.

- **Specific**: Avoid general statements when you deliver feedback. “You seem really angry lately,” is not nearly as helpful as, “You yelled at a customer yesterday and this morning you slammed the desk drawer shut as Sharon was reaching inside.”

- **Documented**: Base your comments on documentation, facts, and your own observation.

- **Personal (In the Right Way)**: Describe the behavior that is unsatisfactory, rather than judge a person because of it. Base it on their actions, and don’t make a personal attack on the individual.

Does you have questions about, or elements to add to, this list of characteristics?

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Motivational Techniques

Motivation is a tricky subject. As leaders, we used to talk in terms that said the only way to get a person to do something was to make them want to do it in order to get something they want or avoid something they don't want. In other words, we would pay them or punish them. This discussion included terms of managing people with a whip, a carrot, and a plant.

The Carrot

This represents incentives and rewards. This could be time off, pay bonuses, or promotional gifts like jackets. While this approach may work in some instances, it’s been demonstrated that offering carrots often actually reduces productivity. You can see excellent descriptions of repeat experiments from a range of job types in Daniel H. Pink’s book Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us.

The Whip

This represents threats and consequences. Although such techniques are often perceived negatively, they do have their place for short-term goal achievement. In other words, employees never respond positively to this management style, but if the boss cracks the whip, they will get things done. Consequences for poor performance may include suspension and termination, of course, but those are big clubs and sometimes we just need a little stick. Smaller reactions might include no recognition, no promotions, or disciplinary interviews.

However, we must remember to recognize people when they do something good (and let’s agree on something here: there is a lot more good work going on than there is poor work). If we continue to ignore people after their good work, our concept of consequences will backfire.

The Plant

This represents a positive environment. It suggests many things a leader should strive for: employees knowing their work is important, an open atmosphere, fair dealings with all, training, good lines of communication, a feeling of support from company leaders, and a feeling of self-esteem.
What Do You Think?

You may have heard about people who have a hobby and they are fantastic at it. Maybe they like to do carpentry, paint, write, or sculpt. You’ll say, “Wow, you are really good at that. You should do it for a living.” And they’ll say that doing what they love for money would take all the fun out of it. You might shake your head at them, but what they say is true: once they lose the passion for and activity, the results will change.

In his book *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, Daniel Pink examines the success of sharing through open source projects. Some of the most successful tools around (such as Mozilla, Linux, and Wikipedia) were all developed by people who were doing the work without being paid. He also looks at pay for performance incentives that measurably lower results. For linear, predictable tasks, incentives can temporarily lead to greater production. However, when we are looking for more creative results, problem solving, or innovation, pay for performance typically backfires. If we pay people to donate blood, we get fewer donations. When we reward a lab monkey to solve puzzles, they solve less. When we reward children for drawing pictures, they draw less.

High levels of creativity result from tasks that we find interesting, challenging, and captivating. This includes things that we often ask from our staff, like problem solving, planning, thinking out of the box, and completing projects. Our task is to create a climate where staff’s internal motivation will activate their own performance. In order to be successful, supervisors need to know their staff, what motivates them, and how to create a climate that they find stimulating.

The truth is that we can’t motivate other people. Motivation is intrinsic (meaning it comes from within). However, what we can do is provide the right atmosphere for employees to identify their own motivations, link into them, and respond.
What do you think is the right atmosphere?

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Coaching Others to Success

What Coaching Is

Coaching is a conversation that helps people develop their skills, achieve success, and reach their goals. Coaching is a way of expressing the truth, confronting tough issues, and is centered around language that inspires. It is usually one on one, although there is team coaching going on now too. Coaching skills can help others see you as a strong, successful executive leader.

The Coaching Formula
The Three Factors

In order to be successful, there are three things that we need to consider:

- **Aptitude**: The knowledge, skills, ability, and talent to reach your objectives.
- **Motivation**: The attitude, confidence, focus, and drive to reach your objectives.
- **Resources**: Having the support (people and things), tools, and time to reach your objectives.

With these three factors addressed, people have the ability to be successful. A coach can help with all of these elements and to reach success at any level. The coach can also help to shift from small successes to moderate ones, and onward to high levels of success.
Session Seven: Pre-Assignment Review

Skill Area One

Area for Improvement:

What can I do to improve in this area?

What are my first steps? (Include a deadline for each step.)

Who will help me be accountable and achieve my goals?

Skill Area Two

Area for Improvement:

What can I do to improve in this area?

What are my first steps? (Include a deadline for each step.)
Who will help me be accountable and achieve my goals?


Skill Area Three
Area for Improvement:

What can I do to improve in this area?

What are my first steps? (Include a deadline for each step.)

Who will help me be accountable and achieve my goals?


Skill Area Four
Area for Improvement:

What can I do to improve in this area?
What are my first steps? (Include a deadline for each step.)

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Who will help me be accountable and achieve my goals?

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**Skill Area Five**

Area for Improvement:

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What can I do to improve in this area?

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What are my first steps? (Include a deadline for each step.)

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Who will help me be accountable and achieve my goals?

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Personal Action Plan

I am already doing these things well:

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I want to improve these areas:

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I have these resources to help me:

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<tr>
<th>As a result of what I have learned in this workshop, I am going to...</th>
<th>My target date is...</th>
<th>I will know I have succeeded when...</th>
<th>I will follow up with myself on...</th>
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Recommended Reading List


Course Evaluation

Dear Trainee,

We have a special assignment for you during this workshop. We would greatly appreciate it if you could answer a few questions about your training experience. This will help us make your next experience even better! Please return this form to your trainer after the workshop.

Thank you!

Your Training Team

General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location of Course</td>
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<td>Course Length</td>
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<tr>
<th>A Bit About You (Optional)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you want to be contacted about your training experience?</td>
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<tr>
<td>If so, please provide your telephone number and/or e-mail address.</td>
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</table>
**General Evaluation**

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, the training session was high quality.</td>
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<td>The course covered the material I expected.</td>
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<td>This training will be beneficial to me in the performance of my job.</td>
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<td>I had plenty of opportunities to practice what I learned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The course gave me specific ideas and tools to implement in my workplace.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The trainer was professional, well-prepared, and knowledgeable about the topics at hand.</td>
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<td>The training facility was well-equipped and comfortable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall, this course was worth my time and money.</td>
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**Final Thoughts**

If a colleague was going to take this workshop, what would you tell them?

If you could change one thing about this course, what would it be?

What was the most important thing that you learned today?

Do you have anything else to share?