

Executive Presence Blueprint

Day 13 • Career

The invisible factor blocking 78% of professionals from senior promotions

Key Takeaways:

- Executive presence is 67% about how you communicate, not what you know or accomplish
- Master the "Power Triangle": confident body language, strategic speaking patterns, and decisive decision-making
- Practice the "Executive Edit" - eliminate filler words, apologetic language, and permission-seeking phrases

Here's what nobody tells you about career advancement: Your technical skills and achievements only get you so far. The invisible barrier between middle management and executive roles isn't competence - it's presence.

Research from the Center for Talent Innovation reveals that executive presence accounts for 26% of what it takes to get promoted to senior leadership. Yet 78% of professionals have no idea how to develop it, mistakenly believing it's an innate trait you're born with.

Executive presence isn't about being the loudest person in the room or having perfect charisma. It's about projecting confidence, competence, and leadership potential through specific, learnable behaviors.

The Executive Presence Blueprint has three core pillars:

Pillar 1: Command Presence (Physical) Your body language speaks before you do. Executives take up appropriate space and move with purpose.

- **Power posture:** Stand and sit tall, shoulders back, feet firmly planted. Avoid fidgeting, crossed arms, or shrinking into chairs. - **Strategic eye contact:** Maintain eye contact for 3-5 seconds at a

time. When presenting, connect with different sections of the room. - **Purposeful gestures:** Use open palm gestures when speaking. Keep movements deliberate, not frantic. - **Executive handshake:** Firm grip, 2-3 pumps, direct eye contact. Practice until it's automatic.

Pillar 2: Communication Authority (Verbal) How you speak matters more than what you say. Executives communicate with clarity and conviction.

- **Eliminate weak language:** Replace "I think maybe we should..." with "I recommend we..." Cut filler words like "um," "like," and "so." - **Lower your vocal tone:** Speak from your chest, not your throat. Practice speaking 10% slower than feels natural. - **Use decisive language:** Instead of "Does that make sense?" say "What questions do you have?" Replace "I'm sorry, but..." with "Here's what I propose..." - **Strategic pausing:** Use silence for emphasis. Pause before important points and after asking questions.

Pillar 3: Leadership Mindset (Mental) Executives think strategically and make decisions confidently, even with incomplete information.

- **Speak to outcomes:** Frame discussions around business impact and results, not just activities or processes. - **Ask executive-level questions:** "What's the strategic implication?" "How does this align with our objectives?" "What's the ROI?" - **Own your expertise:** Stop saying "I might be wrong, but..." Start with "Based on my experience..." or "The data shows..." - **Make clear recommendations:** Don't just present problems. Come with solutions and next steps.

The 30-Day Executive Presence Challenge:

Week 1: Record yourself in meetings (audio only). Count filler words and note vocal patterns.

Week 2: Practice power postures. Set phone reminders to check your posture every 2 hours.

Week 3: Implement the "Executive Edit" - eliminate one weak language pattern per day.

Week 4: Start contributing strategic insights in meetings. Ask bigger-picture questions.

Real-world application: Instead of: "Um, I was thinking, and I might be wrong, but maybe we should consider possibly looking at our customer retention strategy?"

Executive version: "Our customer retention data shows a 15% decline this quarter. I recommend we analyze the top three churn factors and implement targeted solutions within 30 days."

Common executive presence killers: - Apologizing for your opinions - Speaking too quickly when nervous - Checking your phone during conversations - Deferring to others when you have expertise -

Using tentative language about your accomplishments

Remember: Executive presence isn't about being perfect or intimidating. It's about being someone others want to follow and trust with bigger responsibilities.

Start implementing one element today. Your future executive-level opportunities depend on how others perceive your leadership potential right now.

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