

Theatre-to-Leadership Toolkit

Free Resource from Mission-Driven Momentum Podcast

Practical tools and exercises for bringing theatre principles into leadership. Use these frameworks to prepare for high-stakes moments, strengthen team culture, and develop authentic executive presence.

THEATRE PRINCIPLES FOR LEADERSHIP

Rehearsal	Practice until it's second nature, creating freedom to adapt
"Yes, And"	Build on ideas instead of blocking them
Presence	Project confidence through grounding, intention, and authenticity
Ensemble	Build teams through trust, timing, and collective success

REHEARSAL PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Use before board presentations, funder pitches, difficult conversations, staff town halls, or crisis communications.

Before You Rehearse

- Define your core message in one sentence
- List your 3-5 key points
- Anticipate likely questions or pushback
- Clarify desired outcome (what should they think/feel/do?)

Rehearsal Stages

Run 1 (Solo): Say it out loud start to finish. Don't stop. Time yourself. Notice where you stumble.

Run 2 (Solo): Smooth transitions. Practice key phrases. Work on pacing.

Run 3 (With Colleague): Get interrupted with questions. Practice staying grounded.

Final: Focus on presence (eye contact, breath, grounding). Trust you know it.

After Rehearsal, Ask

- Where did I feel confident vs. where did I stumble?
- What questions threw me off?
- Am I running too long/short?
- What would make this 10% better?

"YES, AND" MEETING TEMPLATE

Duration: 60 minutes

0-5 min	Framing the challenge. Be specific. This is generative time, not decision time.
5-20 min	"Yes, And" Brainstorming. Build on what's offered. No criticism. Just addition.
20-40 min	Exploration. Ask clarifying questions. Stay curious ("What would it take?" not "Why won't this work?")
40-55 min	Synthesis. Identify patterns, promising directions, next steps.
55-60 min	Closing. Name what was valuable. Thank contributors.

Ground Rules for "Yes, And" Meetings

- ✓ Listen fully before responding
- ✓ Build on ideas rather than replacing them
- ✓ Defer judgment during brainstorming
- ✓ Make space for quieter voices
- ✓ Celebrate wild ideas

Momentum Prompts When Conversation Stalls

- "What if we had unlimited resources?"
- "What would success look like in five years?"
- "What's a small pilot version?"
- "If we couldn't do it this way, what's another approach?"

PRESENCE-BUILDING EXERCISES

Four Elements of Executive Presence

Groundedness	Physical awareness: feet planted, weight distributed, breath steady
Intention	Clear purpose: What do you want this room to understand?
Authenticity	Leading from your natural voice, not imitating others
Silence	Comfortable with pauses; using silence for emphasis

Quick Presence Reset (2 minutes)

1. Stand with feet hip-width apart
2. Three deep breaths: in through nose, out through mouth
3. Notice tension. Gently release it.
4. Feel your feet on the ground

Power Pause Technique

When asked a question → Count to 3 → Breathe → Respond

ENSEMBLE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Activity	Time	How It Works
Trust Circle	15 min	One person shares challenge. Group responds with supportive questions only. No advice.
Coordination	10 min	Count 1-20 as group. Only one person speaks at a time. If two speak, start over. No planning.
Shared Success	20 min	Share a win and credit someone who made it possible. Builds appreciation.
Role Rotation	Ongoing	Rotate facilitator, note-taker, timekeeper each week. Builds shared ownership.

CRISIS ADAPTATION PLAYBOOK

Immediate Response (First 5 Minutes)

1. Breathe. Ground yourself physically.
2. Acknowledge what's happened without dramatizing.
3. State what you know to be true right now.
4. Name the next step, even if it's small.

Ask Yourself

- What resources do I still have?
- What's the core outcome I'm trying to achieve?
- Is there another path?
- Who can help right now?
- What would "good enough" look like?

Team Communication

- ✓ Be transparent about what you know/don't know
- ✓ Stay calm (your team takes cues from you)
- ✓ Be decisive with available information
- ✓ Trust your ensemble to step up

LEADERSHIP REFLECTION QUESTIONS

On Preparation

- What conversations am I not rehearsing for?
- Where would practice give me confidence?
- What's one moment I could rehearse this week?

On Improvisation

- When do I default to "no" instead of exploring?
- How do I respond when plans fall apart?
- What would "yes, and" change?

On Presence

- When do I feel most grounded?
- What physical habits undermine my presence?
- Am I leading from my authentic voice?

On Ensemble

- Do my team members trust each other?
- Am I building individuals or an ensemble?
- When did we last celebrate collective success?

SIGNS THESE PRINCIPLES ARE WORKING

Rehearsal

- More confident in high-stakes moments
- Handle unexpected questions smoothly
- People comment you seem more prepared

"Yes, And"

- Meetings feel generative, not defensive
- Team brings more ideas forward
- Discovering unexpected solutions

Presence

- Feel grounded during difficult conversations
- People listen more attentively
- Comfortable with silence

Ensemble

- Team supports each other unprompted
- Success feels shared, not individual
- Others step up when someone's out

NEED MORE SUPPORT?

Podcast: Listen to Episode 6 at missiondrivenpod.com

Blog: Read the companion post for deeper examples and stories

Consulting: Want to develop leadership skills in your organization? Contact The Scanland Group at contact@thescanlandgroup.com or visit thescanlandgroup.com

From The Scanland Group:

*Keep leading with heart, keep showing up with purpose,
and keep creating a world where everyone belongs.*