

EXECUTIVE & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

PRESENTED BY

**BAY AREA
EXECUTIVE
COACH**
THINK MORE - LEAD BETTER



THE AUTHORITATIVE GUIDE TO
EXECUTIVE PRESENCE

Table of Contents

Executive Presence Defined page 2

Why It Matters page 3

Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence page 4

The Organizational Benefits Derived from Leaders with Executive Presence .. page 14

How to Develop Executive Presence page 18

And Finally page 27

Resources page 29

Self-Assessment Tool page 30

Here to Help page 31

“Executive Presence” Defined

In its most basic terms, “executive presence” refers to a combination of personality and character traits that make a leader believable, trusted, and respected by the people being led. It's the ability to inspire others to be assertive in their roles through the consistent demonstration of clear leadership by the person in charge.

Executive presence is about a leader’s ability to inspire confidence in everyone around them. This leader inspires confidence in their subordinates and team by establishing themselves as someone to respect and follow. This leader also inspires confidence among peers through their demonstrated competence and reliability. And, perhaps most importantly, a leader with executive presence inspires confidence among senior leaders, establishing their potential for achieving superior results.

Why it Matters

Executive presence opens the door to new and better opportunities for leaders and the people they lead. While the exact nature of executive presence may not be clear, the need for it is. Many leaders are passed over for promotions because they just don't have it.



Besides the correlation with moving up, executive presence is critical during difficult times when leadership becomes more challenging. Teams look to their leaders for confidence, vision and resolve during difficult times and those very same leaders must convey all that and more to lead the team through to better times.

Executive presence is not a “nice to have” but rather a “must have” in most organizations once you reach a certain level.

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Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence

Now let's look at some widely recognized characteristics of leaders with executive presence.

1. They Exhibit a High Degree of Emotional Intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to identify, understand, and assess not just your emotions, but those of others.

Emotionally intelligent leaders are compassionate, self-aware, authentic, and intuitive. Leaders who display high emotional intelligence also tend to be effective and empathic communicators.



Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence

2. They're Effective and Inspiring Public Speakers.

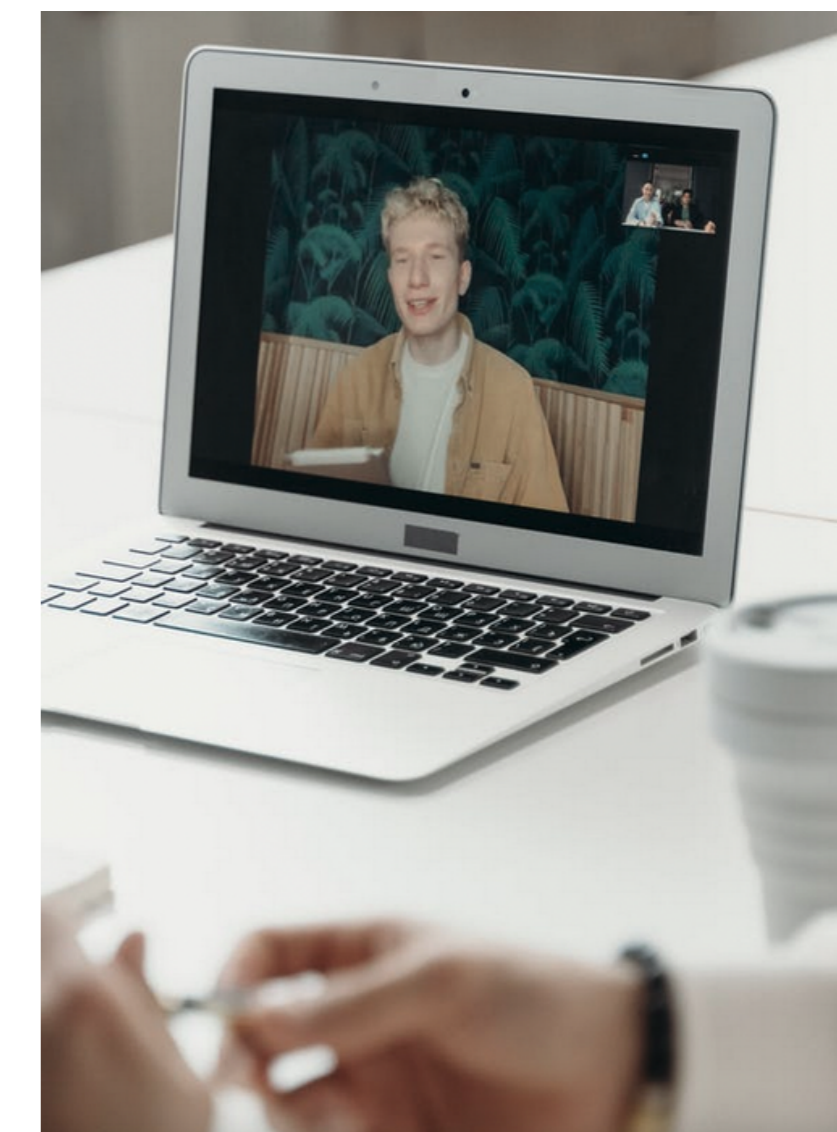


Clear and compelling messages, delivered with an appropriate touch of humor and compassion, are essential to the individual who wants to come across as a leader. Command an audience and you'll influence what they think and do. This is the arena in which executive presence and its force are on full display for others to see and feel.

Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence

3. They Communicate Well on All Levels.

Leaders with executive presence aren't simply good public speakers, they're good communicators at all levels: in small groups, one on one, with colleagues or strangers, in written formats, and in video and audio programs. These people know how to get their message across regardless of the circumstances or media.



Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence

4. They Consistently Project Quiet Confidence.



Leaders with executive presence know they don't have to be loud to lead. In fact, it's to their advantage to be calm, rational, and almost humble at times, especially when facing a crisis or unusual challenge.

A healthy balance of humility and confidence is essential to executive presence.

Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence

5. They Act with Conviction and Integrity.

People trust leaders who do what they say they will do. They respect those who stand by their convictions and whose values cannot be shaken. Such leaders are consistent and deeply committed to doing the right thing for the right reason. Integrity is a personality trait universally admired. Many people are drawn to integrity because it's something they often feel they lack in themselves to some extent. When they see integrity expressed by a leader, they follow that leader, hoping to be inspired into making their own better personal choices.



Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence

6. They Have a Signature Style.



Leaders with executive presence have a style that's entirely their own. They don't imitate or mimic other great leaders. It could be their mannerisms, the passionate way they talk about their beliefs, or the intriguing ways they communicate important messages. No matter what it is, there's something utterly unique that sets them apart. Think of Steve Jobs when it comes to a leader who possessed a signature style that projected passion, confidence, and conviction.

Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence

7. They're Authentic and Genuine.

People are drawn to those with executive presence because they're genuine. When leaders are straightforward, comfortable in their skin, and honest about their flaws, they become more relatable and trustworthy. There's something endearing and admirable about their willingness to make mistakes and admit to fears and uncertainties. It's a humanization that other people readily embrace and appreciate.



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Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence

8. They Understand How Others Experience Them.



People with executive presence have a keen understanding of how they're perceived by others. To gain this insight, they ask their mentors, and get feedback from colleagues, peers, and subordinates. It's best when this feedback comes from a cross-section of people who see the leader in various situations. This understanding helps the leader continually work on their leadership effectiveness.

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Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence

9. They're Excellent Listeners.

One of the most important communication skills is the ability to listen. People with strong executive presence are exceptional listeners. They engage others with their full attention, they ask great questions, and they use listening as a way to explore important ideas. The ability to listen effectively also demonstrates self-confidence, another critical part of executive presence. Ironically, there are leaders who are tempted to listen less and speak more to prove themselves as they move up. This behavior works against building an aura of executive presence.



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Characteristics of a Leader with Executive Presence

10. They Possess Charisma.



Charisma may be the hardest trait to put your finger on. People see charismatic leaders as being charming, totally present, interested in connecting with everyone, having a sense of humor, displaying humility, and expressing a caring and generous manner. Work on manifesting these traits and let the charisma come naturally as a result.

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The Organizational Benefits Derived from Leaders with Executive Presence

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When a leader demonstrates ongoing executive presence, the results can be beneficial across the organization they lead. Here are some prime examples of why this is true:

1. Improved Employee Morale.

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When an executive team member possesses leadership presence, it often leads to better company morale.

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Energetic leadership helps employees feel more satisfied in their positions and increases confidence about the direction of the firm.



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The Organizational Benefits Derived from Leaders with Executive Presence

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2. Lower Turnover Rates.

Better employee morale leads to lower turnover rates. This can minimize the hiring and training costs that come with onboarding new employees, helping a company maximize its resources.

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3. Higher Productivity Rates.

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When employees are more satisfied and feel respect from their leaders, they're more likely to be productive. Higher productivity rates typically increase business success.

The Organizational Benefits Derived from Leaders with Executive Presence

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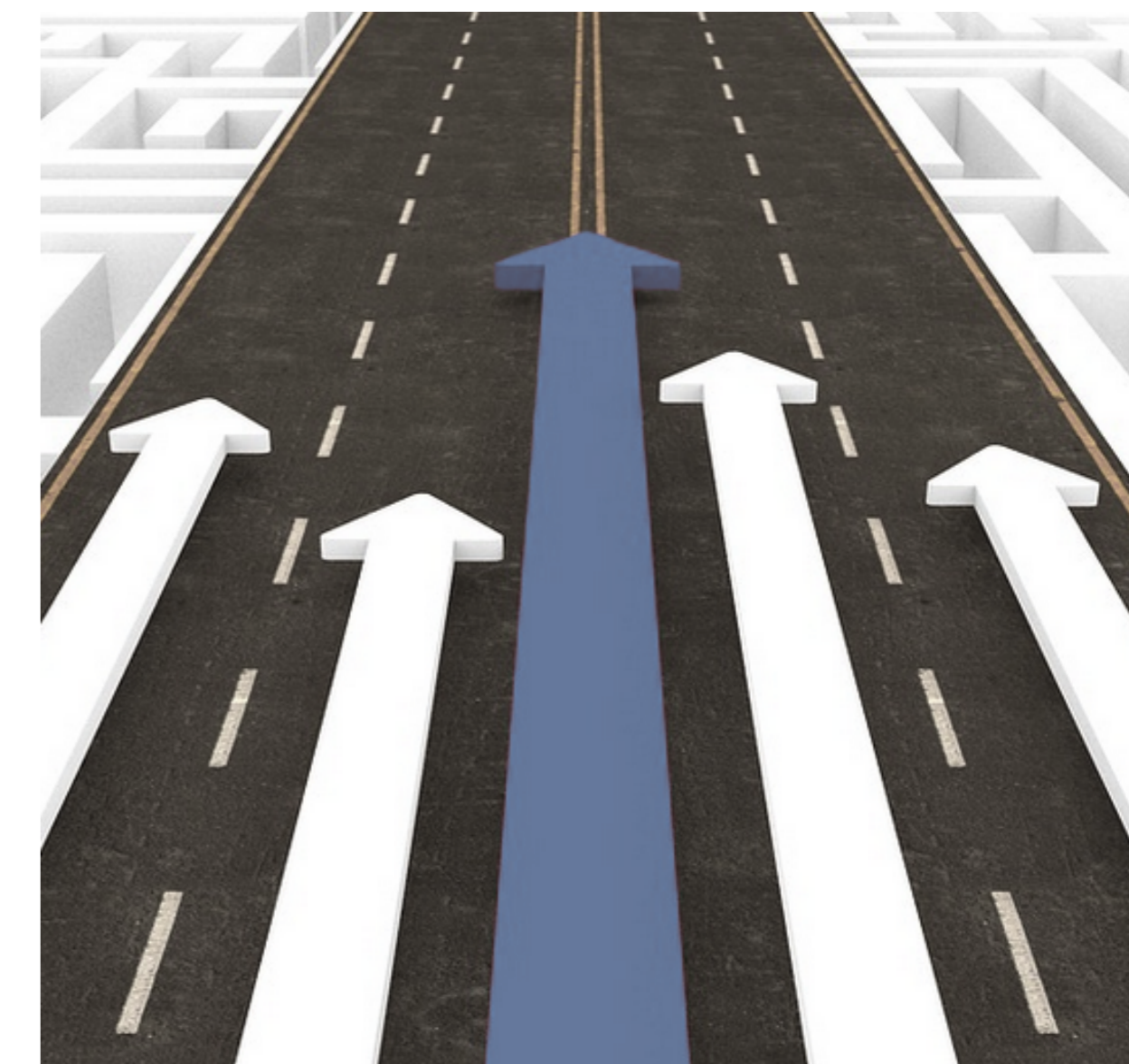
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4. An Aligned Organization.

When employees are feeling upbeat, have clarity about their role, and possess confidence in their leadership, the organization becomes aligned which can propel them past their competition.

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1 How to Develop Executive Presence

2 Here are ways an aspiring leader can cultivate their
3 own sense of executive presence.

4 Like any skill set, it takes determination to learn
5 and dedication to practice before it's fully realized,
6 but the short and the long-term rewards make this
7 effort a rewarding one.
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1 How to Develop Executive Presence

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1. Start from the Inside Out

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Executive presence isn't just about how others perceive you. It starts with how you perceive yourself. If you don't believe in yourself and your abilities, that self-doubt will be apparent, no matter what you look like or what clothes you're wearing. Therefore, before you look outward, look inward.

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Work on developing your self-confidence by challenging yourself to try new things, learn new skills, take on uncomfortable tasks you previously would shy away from. The more you push yourself out of your comfort zone, the more your confidence will grow naturally.

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How to Develop Executive Presence

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2. Become Acutely Self-Aware.

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Executive presence involves understanding how others perceive you. Never neglect opportunities to increase your self-awareness. Get feedback from peers and subordinates, take evaluation tests, work with a professional coach to enhance your abilities in this area. (And remember that it's just as important to recognize and appreciate your assets as it is to identify your vulnerabilities.) With heightened self-awareness, a leader tunes into their strengths and can leverage them to the full advantage of all. Self-awareness is at the heart of executive presence.

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How to Develop Executive Presence

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3. Master Body Language.

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Body language can have a substantial impact on executive presence. In general, you want to ensure you're relaxed, comfortable, and confident. While various cultures and organizations may have different norms, there are some general guidelines:

Make eye contact: another part of effective executive presence. Eye contact can help you appear self-assured, and it can also help people feel you are actively listening to them. Conversely, too little eye contact can make you appear disengaged, distracted or have something to hide.

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How to Develop Executive Presence

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Mind your posture: if you have a habit of keeping your arms folded in front of you, your body language impedes people from connecting with you. It becomes a barrier between you and your audience. Instead, keep your arms at your side or use your hands and arms for gesturing. Also, maintain an upright posture to look more confident.

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Watch your facial expressions: leaders with executive presence have a calm demeanor and convey emotion through changes in facial expressions. When you speak with others, present a look of sincere interest. Smile and nod. When speaking to groups, look confident and smile. Avoid expressions that might convey impatience, judgment or dissatisfaction.

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How to Develop Executive Presence

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4. Cultivate Your Network and Build Political Savvy.

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People with exceptional executive presence understand that companies are composed of complex relationships and there's likely to be some level of clashing egos and competing agendas.

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Organizational politics often arise when ambitious people work together. People with strong executive presence are good at cultivating a network of relationships and developing the political savvy to steer challenging situations into a productive direction.

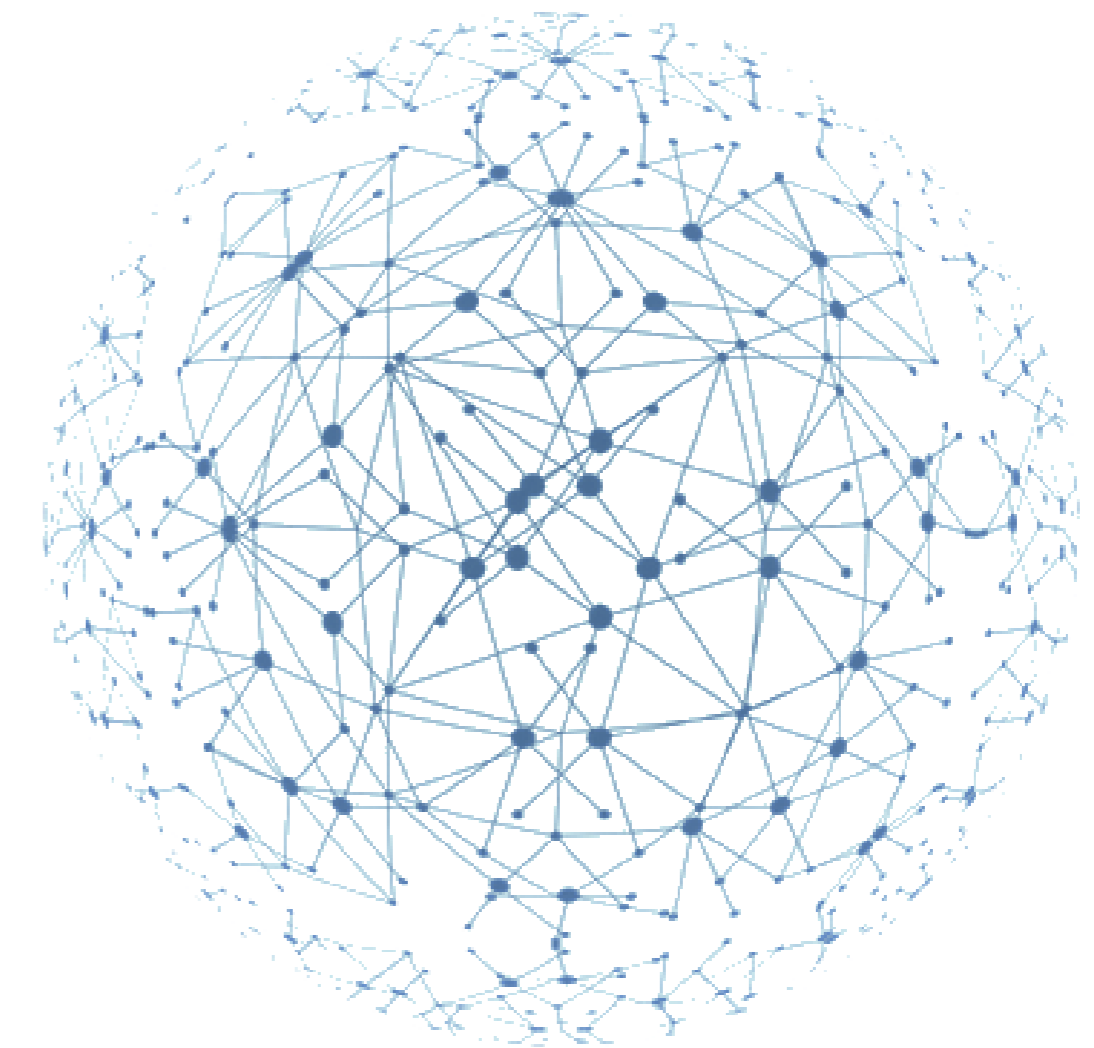
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The more people you know well across the company, the more likely you are to feel confident in your sense of the pulse of the organization and how to make wise decisions that will be supported.

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How to Develop Executive Presence

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5. Learn to Operate Effectively Under Stress.



Do you get flustered or overwhelmed when the stakes are high? Do you lose your cool, or do you have a reputation for being temperamental? No one wants to see a leader who's overwhelmed. People with good executive presence present themselves as calm, even-keeled and in control at all times. If you need to work on this area, practice mindfulness and learn to detach your feelings from the situation and instead focus on the moment and what's needed. Also, if necessary, get into the best possible physical shape and get plenty of good rest. You'll be better able to handle stress when you're fit and energetic.

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How to Develop Executive Presence

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6. Make Sure Your Appearance isn't a Distraction.

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We've all heard somewhere in our lives that neatness counts, and it's true. Visual appearance makes a first impression, and first impressions, whether conscious or subconscious, are powerful. Work to ensure your appearance inspires confidence. This doesn't mean rushing out and buying expensive designer clothes. Rather, this strategy is about making sure your appearance is appropriate for the setting and the company culture, and that it's consistent with others at the level you aspire to reach. Be willing to work with an image consultant if you're not sure of this aspect of executive presence.

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How to Develop Executive Presence

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7. Have a Vision, and Articulate it Well.

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Executives with presence almost universally have a compelling vision – a well-conceived mental picture of what they’re working to accomplish. A robust, well-articulated vision is ultimately how you make your mark. It’s something that can set you apart and it’s a powerful tool for inspiring confidence. Visionary thinking is a potent component of that total package called “executive presence.”

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Read prodigiously, study trends, understand the competitive landscape, examine fields entirely different than your own, connect with big thinkers. By exercising your mind in these myriad ways, vision will come more naturally to you.

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How to Develop Executive Presence

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8. Finally, Practice and Practice Some More.

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Mastery of any skill comes through study and repetition. With enough practice, new skills become new habits. Executives who seem to effortlessly demonstrate executive presence actually rehearse to become authentic and natural. They practice what they're going to say and how they are going to say it. They record themselves and study the recordings to see where they appear strong and where they appear not so strong.

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They do dry runs of important presentations before small groups of trusted mentors to iron out details and get unbiased feedback. In short, they practice the art of executive presence until it becomes second nature. Attaining true executive presence requires this continuous improvement mindset, and the dedication to see it through.

And Finally...

One additional thought: find a role model you can learn from.

Who do you think has a strong executive presence and why? They likely exemplify the strengths and characteristics you want to emulate. Study them and learn from their example.



Resources

There are numerous books, articles, and videos available covering every aspect of executive presence. Here are a few titles to get you started:

Books:

Executive Presence: The Missing Link between Merit and Success
by Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Rosalind Ashford, et al.

Executive Presence for the Modern Leader: A Guide to Cultivating Success and Thriving in the Workplace by D.A. Benton

Executive Presence, Second Edition: The Art of Commanding Respect Like a CEO by Harrison Monarth and McGraw Hill-Ascent Audio

Composure: The Art of Executive Presence by Kate Purmal , Lee Epting , et al.

How to Get 'It': The Power of Executive Presence for Women by Coni Judge



Resources



YouTube Videos:

Executive Presence | Sylvia Ann Hewlett | Talks at Google

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2QOAFWLedE>

Developing Your Executive Presence | Increase Your Impact As A Leader

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-AWo4Flzsw>

How to Build Executive Presence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfojLwov784>

How to Develop Executive Presence and Command the Room With Confidence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYzHqU92sX4>

The Science Behind Executive Presence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2Hd6kYSjxA>

Self - Assessment Tool

Use this tool to assess your own level of executive presence and to determine the areas where you excel and where you need to improve. Click [this link](#) to access the Self-Assessment.

BAY AREA EXECUTIVE COACH

THE EXECUTIVE PRESENCE SELF-EVALUATION FORM

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	Excellent	Good	Could be better	Needs work
Self-Awareness				
Listening				
Empathy for Others				
Authenticity				
Calmness under Pressure				
Interpersonal Communication				
Personal Integrity				
Acting with Confidence & Conviction				
Accountability				

BODY LANGUAGE	Excellent	Good	Could be better	Needs work
Eye Contact				
Posture				
Tone of Voice				
Facial Expressions				

OTHER ATTRIBUTES	Excellent	Good	Could be better	Needs work
Public Speaking				
Personal Appearance				
Style & Charisma				
Vision and Insight				
Political Savvy/Networking				
Commitment to Personal Growth				
Decision-Making/Decisiveness				

<https://www.bayareaexecutivecoach.com/>

We're Here to Help You!

Acquiring your own brand of executive presence can seem like a daunting challenge, but with guidance and practice you can get there. We're experts in helping leaders attain their full potential through mastery of emotional intelligence and the communication skills essential for success. To learn how we can help you build executive presence, [contact us](#) today to have a conversation about your goals and aspirations.

