

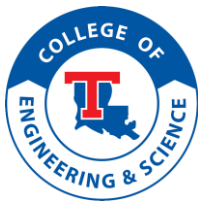
Executive Presence: *The Ability to Connect, Motivate, Collaborate, and Inspire*

Dr. Jenna Carpenter

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What is Presence?

Presence is

1) the ability to authentically **connect, captivate, motivate, collaborate, and inspire** others through flexible, value-centered communications and leadership.

2) the ability to project genuine **confidence** that inspires the **trust and appreciation** of others.

Presence is *more than* having charisma, good presentation skills or dressing well!

Executive Presence vs. Presence

- Presence is *the ability to comfortably draw and hold attention while delivering a message.*
- Executive presence is *the ability to comfortably draw and hold attention while delivering a “business”-savvy message.*
- “Business”-savvy Message:
 - Clear
 - Concise
 - Connected

Why is Executive Presence Important?

- Research suggests that being perceived as leadership material is essential to being promoted into leadership positions.
- Senior executives say that *executive presence* counts for 26% of what it takes to get promoted.

Why do women struggle with Executive Presence?

- Executive presence involves a number of traditionally male attributes.
- Women are often held to a stricter code of behavior than men and punished more severely for deviations from that code.
- Feedback women receive on executive presence is often contradictory and confusing (ie., the range of “okay” behavior for men is wider than it is for women).
- So... Women are unclear on how to act.

Keys to *Executive Presence*:

- The ability to project:
 - Confidence
 - Poise under pressure
 - Decisiveness
 - Assertiveness
- Strong speaking skills
- Ability to read an audience or situation
- Appearance

Projecting Confidence

- Know your “business”
 - Intelligence (knowledge), Insight (wisdom)
- Know Yourself
 - Know who you are, reflect your values in decisions, know how and when to adapt
- Identify your objectives
 - Convey? Convince? Coach?
- Be clear in your message
 - What do you want, need, or expect?

Poise under Pressure

- Manage distractions
- Put fear aside
- Adapt to what circumstances prescribe
- Focus on others there, not yourself
- Be prepared, know your content
- Take a deep breath

Decisiveness and Assertiveness:

- Need a baseline of self-confidence
- Willing to deal with unpredictable situations
- Honed presentation skills
- Be firm but polite
- Find your “executive voice” (your communication assets: listening, thinking and speaking on your feet, maintaining your composure) and leverage it

Strong Speaking Skills:

- Speak up
- Use strong, clear language – be succinct
- Avoid qualifiers
- Communicate with passion and energy
- Display positive body language
 - Stand tall
 - Make eye contact
 - Offer a firm handshake
 - Use an authoritative tone of voice
- Use a steady voice

Strong Speaking Skills, part 2:

- Express feelings and emotions to capture interest
- Use your voice and body congruently
- Tell stories to make your point real (plan them ahead of time!)
- Show excitement, interest about what you are doing
- Use eyes (connect), body (leaning) as a tool to help convey your message

Ability to Read An Audience or Situation:

- Goal: Connect, build trust, establish relationships
- Be authentic
- Truly listen
- Make eye contact
- Share of yourself
- Engage the audience

Appearance:

- Take the time and effort to exhibit a physical presence that reflects the image you want to portray:
 - Casual vs. formal
 - Appropriate to audience expectations vs. only your own individual expression
 - Your unique style vs. a copy of someone else
- Appearance is a small part of the equation
- **BUT...**Major mistakes in appearance are detrimental:
 - unkempt attire
 - too tight, too baggy clothing
 - provocative clothing

Executive Presence Quiz:

Rate yourself (1 – 7; 1 = low, 7 = high) on each of the following attributes:

- Genuine: do you walk-the-talk? avoid pretending or cover-ups?
- Clear communicator: simple, understandable, no jargon, code or spin?
- Present: inquire, listen, process, use body language, facial expressions, tone-of-voice to demonstrate complete attention?
- Display confidence and courage: take innovative risks that others are excited to join?
- Display optimism and passion: deeply committed?
- Like colleagues: see people in a positive light and treat everyone with respect?
- Laugh at own mistakes and willing to be vulnerable: no blame or shame?

Putting it All Together

- Build on your own natural strengths
- Integrate the elements into who you are and how you come across
- Project confidence in who you are and what you have to offer

References

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