

12 Steps to Executive Presence



Philip was furious, he had worked hard, stayed late, been loyal, exceeded his numbers, but missed out on the promotion he was expecting. When he asked his boss the reason, he was told that the other directors felt he lacked, 'Executive Presence'.

Philip hadn't realized that he was missing the 'Secret Ingredient' to success in a modern organization, and it cost him.

Executive Presence is the ability to project confidence and gravitas (substance) under pressure.

Executive Presence is about the right kind of 'visibility', whether the meeting is in person or on a global call.

The good news is that 'Executive Presence' can be learned or developed. Don't miss out like Philip, read and apply these 12-Steps in your career.

1. Speak up

Silence may be 'Golden', but when it comes to establishing your value, you need to be a regular contributor to discussions. You don't have to have all the answers, but by sharing your perspective, you can demonstrate that you are working to be part of the solution. If someone else makes a good point, verbally agree. If you disagree, avoid saying, "Yes but..." and instead say, "Yes and..." and then share your viewpoint or data.

2. Stand Still and Tall

Your body language, gestures and voice tone 'frames' your message. When you stand up straight and 'own' the space, you project confidence when you speak. People are more likely to listen to, and accept your message if it is delivered with confidence. You should try standing during voice calls, people can't see you but they will 'feel' your confidence.

3. Share the 'Why'

Why are you speaking about this topic? And why is it important to your audience? When you start your communication with a strong 'Why', you will immediately engage your listeners. If that 'why' is important to you, you will come across as passionate, if the 'why' is important to them, you will be inspiring.

4. Own it!

"If you've done it, it ain't bragging", Avoid discounting your accomplishments, take appropriate credit for your hard work and your results. You need to cultivate a brand - and that brand is of someone who is competent and gets things done.

5. Take a Position

Avoid 'sitting on the fence' and NEVER apologize for having a point of view. Be prepared to influence or be influenced with a persuasive argument. This demonstrates that you care about the best outcome, and are a driver, rather than a passenger in decision making.

6. Use Assertive Language

Avoid words and phrases like: "I'll try", "Maybe", "It should be OK" or "IMHO".

Instead use assertive language like, "I think", "I believe", and "We will make it happen". It's good to remember that, assertiveness, is not aggressiveness. Assertive is confidently stating your wants, beliefs, desires, in a way that actively encourages others to state their wants, beliefs and desires.

7. Apply Powerful Pauses

Give your words a moment to 'sink in' before you move on to the next idea. Take a breath after each paragraph, make eye contact, be comfortable with the silence, it positions you as thoughtful and measured.

8. Probe with Questions

Use questions to get as much information as possible to understand the issues and ensure you make good decisions. This avoids going off 'half-cocked' and shows that you are not superficial.

9. Get to the point

Once you have understood the issues, give your perspective as briefly as possible. Give just enough context but not too much, people want to know the bottom line as soon as possible. Become an expert at summarizing.

10. Bad News First

The evening news, on TV, does not start with a cute story about a baby animal being born at the Zoo, it starts with something shocking. Don't wrap your messages in 'cotton wool', start your presentation with the bad news or possible threat; this will get everyone's attention. Once you have everyone's attention you can deliver your solution or actions to take. You will be remembered as someone who 'rescued' the situation.

11. Delegate Responsibility

Don't be too eager and offer to do everything; instead be a leader and invite others to step-up and take responsibility. You can then offer your support or mentoring to ensure the agreed actions are taken.

12. Empathize

Being firm, doesn't mean being rude. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care, so show that you know how others feel and acknowledge their efforts. People will double their efforts if they feel appreciated.

Which of the 12 do you need to work on? Show Executive Presence and add your comment. communication, emotions and behavior on the way to getting there (Bryant, Kazan 2012).

Master Coach, Andrew Bryant, CSP PCC



Leadership Consultant, TEDx Speaker and Executive Coach, Andrew Bryant, has facilitated breakthrough learning sessions for senior teams and transformed leaders through 1 to 1 coaching. He is an experienced mentor and has developed mentoring cultures for a number of clients.

He is the author of 'Self-Leadership: How to Become a More Successful, Efficient and Effective Leader from the Inside Out' (McGraw-Hill 2012) as well as 'Self Leadership: 12 Powerful Mindsets & Methods to Win in Life and Business'

As an expert on leadership, Andrew Bryant is famous for his ability to inspire people, to question conventional wisdom and embrace change resulting in positive outcomes. His unique coaching style blends constructive realism with humor to engage self-awareness and clarity of purpose.

English by birth, Australian by citizenship and living in Asia for the last 13-years whilst working globally gives Andrew insights and perspective on what it takes to be an effective leader of people in a multi-cultural world.

Through 1 to 1 coaching, facilitation or leadership retreats, Andrew helps senior managers and 'C-level' executives to face their tough challenges and organizations to develop leaders and high performance cultures.

Andrew Bryant is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) and upholds the ethics of the International Coach Federation. His is also a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) which means that he has been independently audited in terms of professionalism and client satisfaction. Less than 8% of professional speakers achieve this designation.

Andrew is certified in several assessment tools to assist in the coaching or mentoring process.

"I attended Andrew's Executive Presence workshop in Singapore and it was a unique learning, transformational and unforgettable experience! Andrew was able to effectively communicate with each member of our group, so it felt as if you had a personalized 1-to-1 coaching. His leadership skills, charismatic personality, British sense of humor and innovative way of delivering his training made it a success, and ensured that each of us felt the impact. I highly recommend this program!"

- Elena Klimenko, Coultts & Co Ltd, Singapore