



# Do you Present Like a Leader?

Executive presence can feel like an elusive, subjective trait that is hard to define and even harder to exhibit. But executive presence just means a leader's ability to project confidence, clarity, credibility and relational connection in the presence of others.

Executive presence is a learned skill that can help you be a more effective leader. And executive presence doesn't look the same for everyone. Build on who you are and be intentional about what you're communicating to others, through your words, your actions and your body language.

## DO YOUR OWN "PRESENCE AUDIT" – GET FEEDBACK

- ▶ Ask a trusted peer or coach: "When I lead or speak, what's the felt image I leave? What do people *actually* perceive vs. what I intend?"
- ▶ Record yourself in meetings or presentations and observe posture, tone, phrasing, energy.

## PAUSE & GROUND BEFORE SPEAKING

- ▶ Before meetings or high-stakes conversations, take a breath, center, and decide your intention (what feeling or energy do you want to bring?).
- ▶ Consciously slow your rhythm — haste diminishes presence.

## USE STORIES & METAPHORS

- ▶ A fact + story = emotion + cognition.
- ▶ Personal stories (brief, relevant) open connection.

## EXPAND YOUR COMFORT ZONE INTENTIONALLY

- ▶ Volunteer to lead in settings outside your usual (forums, panels, cross-functional groups).
- ▶ Rehearse and debrief after.

## SHOW VULNERABILITY STRATEGICALLY

- ▶ Share what you don't know, and where you're learning.
- ▶ Ask questions aloud: "I'm wrestling with X — what do you think?"
- ▶ But combine it with direction and clarity.

## PRACTICE SAYING LESS, MORE INTENTIONALLY

- ▶ Avoid filler words ("um," "just," "I think") and qualifiers ("sort of," "maybe," "kind of").
- ▶ Begin with your main point, then support with examples or detail — don't bury your message.

## PRACTICE "LISTENING PRESENCE"

- ▶ When others speak, stay fully present: eye contact, minimal interruptions, paraphrase to confirm understanding.
- ▶ This builds relational credibility.

## CONSIDER YOUR PHYSICAL PRESENCE CUES

- ▶ Posture: stand or sit upright without tension
- ▶ Gestures: deliberate, not fidgety
- ▶ Voice: moderate volume, clear articulation
- ▶ Space: don't shrink into corners; take your space

WANT A PARTNER TO HELP YOU GROW IN YOUR EXECUTIVE PRESENCE? LET'S TALK.

KATHERINE COBLE, PARTNER | KATHERINE.COBLE@BORSHOFF.BIZ