



# Three Steps to Mastering Your Executive Presence

**gravitās**<sup>TM</sup>  
Building Leadership Capabilities for Business Performance

When we talk of helping leaders develop capabilities for the next level, presence is top of the mind at most organization. Having executive presence is considered as a critical factor in leading peers, managing upwards and influencing stakeholders across and beyond the organization.

## **Misconceptions and Myths**

However, there are misconceptions around the basic definition of presence:

1. I don't need presence. I know what I need to do to be successful. It has worked for me so far and will work too going forward.
2. Presence is about dressing, grooming, carrying yourself like an executive and demonstrating superior communication skills. If you emulate or model someone who has presence, then you can too.
3. Presence is a factor of charisma that you are born with- either you have it or you don't- training does not help.

Studies and research suggest otherwise.

All leaders reach a point in their careers where what is required to be most effective changes. At this point, only your technical abilities, however superior, are not enough to help you succeed. You need executive presence.



**Amy Jen su and Muriel Wilkins** of HBR publication- “Own the Room” give a more comprehensive definition of Executive presence-

*Leadership presence is the ability to consistently and clearly articulate your value proposition while influencing and connecting with others.*

Contrary to popular belief, Presence is much deeper than just superficial appearance or slick communication skills. It is about the confidence and conviction a leader demonstrates in asserting her point of view while still connecting with her audience in a deep meaningful way.

When leaders with executive presence speak, people listen- because the talk is filled with conviction instead of equivocation.They inspire that “I’ll-follow-you-anywhere” loyalty, conveying an aura of warmth and authenticity to everybody from the receptionist to the CEO.

Also, presence is a behavioural competence and can be learned like any other skill.

So, creating presence is about building a consistent view of yourself that is experienced by others as authentic, confident and adaptable.

### **THE ACE Model for Mastering Your Executive Presence**

Amy & Muriel suggest the ACE model that brings together these different components together that makes creating presence a step by step learning process

- A-** Assumptions/ Beliefs- Mental conditioning
- C-** Communication strategies- Skill Conditioning
- E-** Energy- Physical conditioning

**ASSUMPTIONS-** *What you think, you become- Gautam Buddha*

Our beliefs and mental models have a profound effect upon whatever we say and do. Becoming consciously aware of our beliefs and values gives us the power to make conscious choices and influence the outcome of anything we do.



This power to control your outcomes is the source of confidence and conviction that is the seat of presence we experience.

To build this confidence, evaluate your beliefs and assumptions to see which beliefs are consistent with your values and empower you and which are inconsistent and disempower you.

Common assumptions that come in the way of your confidence are your beliefs around authority figures, defining your organizational role narrowly. Looking at issues from a functional and not considering the bigger picture. Believing that you are too junior, too new or too inexperienced to influence enterprise level issue.

Reframing these assumptions and seeing yourself as a leader who can have significant impact on organization wide initiatives is the first step towards building the executive confidence you need for creating presence.

## **COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

*Communication is not what you say but what is received by your audience*

This is the part where you adapt your communication style and connect with your audience in a meaningful way.

If you have to get your message across, you must connect with your audience at an emotional level for them to open up to your point of view. To do that you have adapt your communication style to your audiences' preferences.

*To teach maths to Ram, not only should you know maths, you must also know Ram.*

Start by analyzing your audience's background, their communication style and their information needs- high-level summary or in-depth insights.

Next, know your stake in the ground and the outcomes you expect from the interaction.

Finally, put all the pieces together to structure your message in a crisp, clear, comprehensible flow for easy consumption.

If you do that, you will find that your interaction with your audiences' are richer, with deeper connection that breed long term trusting relationships.

## ENERGY

*Perception is everything! Manage it!- Tom Peters*

We have been told not to judge a book by its cover but the fact is we constantly do that at a subconscious level.

Research shows that when meeting someone for the first time, we make an opinion about the other person- whether right or wrong-in split seconds. Studies also find that 70-95% of what's "heard" during a communication is non-verbal.

*Who you are shouts so loud, I can't hear what you are saying.*

You are constantly being judged by your appearance- dressing, grooming, and your demeanor under duress.

Managing the signals of our physical presence so they are consistent with how you want people to perceive you is critical in building trust and connection.

Identifying physical cues- managing non-verbal communication, restoring your energy- and staying composed at all times, consciously building connections and being more visible beyond your functional boundaries are some of the ways you can start to manage the first impressions.

In conclusion, It is not by emulating others or by making surface level changes to our appearance alone that is going to help us create presence. Each one of us have a unique path to reach our signature presence that is authentic and truly us.



+91 99000 94826



contact@gravitaslpi.com



www.gravitaslpi.com



## Contact us Today

Gravitas- Network Continual Learning & Training,  
#003, Tamarind Elegance,  
AECS Layout, Kundalahalli, Brookefield,  
Bengaluru, INDIA - 560064

