



Executive Presence - What got you here, won't get you there

Last week, I had the privilege of participating in the Young Women in Energy (YWE) 2024 Summit. YWE aims to address the recognized need to increase female voice, presence, and leadership in the energy industry. I was able to contribute to developing women in STEM by leading several executive coaching breakout sessions on the topic of 'Enhancing Your Executive Presence'. It was inspiring and I was inspired. Thank you.

On my drive home (through a blizzard no doubt), I reflected on the fact that executive presence isn't a female only concern. I've seen many men struggle with this concept as well. As we start out in our STEM based careers, our technical prowess gets us progressing and rewarded. However, we all soon learn that "what got us here, won't get us there". Lots of times, skills like influence, persuasion, clear concise communication, empathy, and confidence are referred to as "soft" skills. No way are those "soft". Those create your power. The combination of technical skills and building POWER skills, create that leadership presence that will definitely take us places, specifically up that ladder.

Executive presence is one of the top challenges that I partner with my clients around. One definition I used in the coaching breakout with YWE was: "Executive presence isn't one isolated quality, but a powerful combination of factors that elicits confidence, builds trust, and motivates others to rally behind your ideas and vision. Essentially, it's how people experience you. As a leader, having a strong executive presence helps you command attention, influence others, and increases others' confidence in your ability to lead effectively". This resonated. Specifically, how people experience you.

As you think of enhancing your power skills; as you build your executive presences, how do you want to show up? How do you want others to experience you? Small changes lead to big results, so what small thing can you change that will impact your executive presence? A behaviour? A facial expression? A posture or where you sit at the table? Specific words you use to describe your idea?

Be Inspired. Be Inspiring.
Stacie



What is Executive Presence anyway?

Expression

- How are you communicating?

Inner Self

- How are you showing up?

Impression

- How are you being perceived?

Client Story

Senior Director of Strategy at a Tech Firm

Working on executive presence from the standpoint of motivating others to rally behind her ideas and vision.

She wants to be approachable and empathetic, yet wants to hold high expectations for the team to deliver strong results.

Collaboration around ideation or solutions is ok, however, once her decision is made or her approval is set, the ability to make thinking visible is her #1 strategy to create buy-in from her team members and colleagues. Sharing a few additional thoughts around the decision or the move forward helps her in setting expectations and motivating staff.

Continuing with the strategy of making thinking visible even further, she started with why...why is a decision or project good for the business and getting results.

Now, she has taken using the power of why to the next level. She has started to share more background with her team members on why a specific initiative or task is important for them to do. This has allowed her to not only set expectations but it encourages her staff to be autonomous in delivering results and excited to know that they are gaining new experiences, skills and visibility.

Her practice to enhance executive presence is around what specific words she is using to describe decisions and vision, her direct yet approachable tone, and having the team be part of the thinking.

"YOUR SMILE IS YOUR LOGO, YOUR PERSONALITY IS YOUR BUSINESS CARD, HOW YOU LEAVE OTHERS FEELING AFTER AN INTERACTION IS YOUR TRADEMARK." - JAY DANZIE