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Executive Presence: The New Superpower?

What exactly is executive presence?

In its simplest terms, executive presence is about your ability to inspire confidence-inspiring confidence in your subordinates that you're the leader they want to follow, inspiring confidence among peers that you're capable and reliable and, most importantly, inspiring confidence among senior leaders that you have the potential for significant achievements.

Why Is Executive Presence an Important Characteristic?

Your executive presence determines whether you gain access to opportunity. There's a saying in leadership, "All the important decisions about you will be made when you're not in the room." It's true. Whether it's a decision about an extraordinary opportunity, a promotion to a critical role, or an assignment to a high-visibility project, you won't be in the room. The opportunities you gain access to depend on the confidence you've inspired in the decision-makers. And, the more significant the occasion, the more crucial executive presence becomes.

How Do You Build Your Executive Presence?

As with any other skill, some people are naturally more gifted at executive presence than others. However, everyone can improve their executive presence with focus and practice. And, perhaps most importantly, the more senior you become, the

more executive presence is required, so everyone needs to focus on improving his or her executive presence continually. Here are some critical steps to build and enhance executive presence:

- **Be transparent** - Have a vision and articulate it well. One of the essential parts of inspiring confidence is having a compelling idea— a well-conceived notion of what you're working to accomplish.
- **Be authentic** - Understand how others experience you. People with fabulous executive presence have a keen understanding of how others perceive them. a variety of situations.
- **Be vulnerable** - Build your communication skills. Good leadership is ultimately about communication, and people with great executive presence are excellent communicators.
- **Build emotional intelligence (EQ)** - Become an excellent listener. Here's something a lot of people forget: One of the most important communication skills is your ability to listen. People with great executive presence are exceptional listeners.
- **Build relations** - Cultivate your network and build political savvy. People with exceptional executive presence are good at cultivating a network of relationships and developing political savvy to influence challenging situations in a productive direction.
- **Build Your Emotional Intelligence (EQ)** - Learn to operate effectively under stress. People with the right executive presence present themselves as calm, even-keeled, composed, well-prepared, and in control at all times. That inspires the confidence that they're ready to take on even more.
- **Build Your Brand** - Make sure your appearance isn't a distraction. Make sure your appearance is appropriate for the setting and the company culture, and that it is consistent with others at the level you aspire to. Pay attention to your clothing choices, tailoring, and grooming, and make sure there's nothing about your appearance that will distract from the impression you want to leave.