



## How good are your executive presence skills?

By Joel Garfinkle

Executive presence is a prerequisite for excelling at a high level. A leader with executive presence radiates gravitas and authority and has mastered the power of expression. These three core domains infuse the leader with an aura of capability.

Developing executive presence is a process that consists of developing nine key executive presence skills that make up those three domains. You may already display some of these skills — at least in certain settings where you feel more comfortable. At the same time, you may need to strengthen your ability to show up with these skills in other contexts. For instance, you may behave differently with your team than with senior leaders.

Mastering executive presence means showing up with EP in all contexts—not just some. This executive presence evaluation will help you understand where you may be displaying a nascent executive presence, so you can build upon it across all settings.

Executive presence evaluation: Contexts where you display executive presence

Now, let's evaluate your overall executive presence. For each of these contexts, ask yourself, "Would I display executive presence in this situation?"

Rate yourself on a scale of 1–10, with 10 being the highest.

Delivering a presentation in a meeting. Do you speak clearly and eloquently, driving your points home and building enthusiasm for your ideas? Or do you mumble, ramble or speak in a monotone?

Leading a higher-level project for the first time. Do you leap into action, rallying the team to tackle specific tasks? Or do you falter, unsure of where to begin?

Participating in regular team meetings. Do you actively advance the dialogue by sharing opinions, defending them boldly and speaking confidently? Or do you mostly stay quiet or back down if challenged?

Presenting the results of your project to the group. Do you speak with authority as you share the outcomes, or does your lackluster delivery cause people to miss the value of your accomplishments?

Sitting by a top executive before a meeting. Do you initiate conversation, sharing something pertinent or asking an insightful question? Or do you shrink into your seat and wait for the meeting to start?

Attending a meeting with a senior leader where you have the opportunity to share a big idea. Do you pitch your idea boldly and clearly? Or do you stay quiet or voice it without conviction?

Coaching another employee in a particular skill area. Do you masterfully show your colleague the ropes, or do you minimize your own expertise and experience?

Having difficult conversations with coworkers or subordinates. Do you tackle interpersonal problems head-on in a productive way, or do you procrastinate and let them fester?

Learning that a coworker needs your specific expertise to succeed in a project. Do you immediately volunteer to help, or do you question your ability to contribute something meaningful?

Meeting one-on-one with your boss about a potential promotion. Do you confidently express why you deserve the opportunity, or do you lack conviction about your own worth?

How did you score? While 100 is the highest possible score, few people will achieve perfection. And you may have found that you're stronger in some contexts than others. This gives you good information to work with in order to improve. You can make a conscious effort to enhance how you show up in those contexts where you struggle to display executive presence — ideally with the help of an experienced executive coach.

Of course, it's possible to miss some of our own hidden strengths and weaknesses. As a next step, gain feedback from people you work with to better understand how others perceive you as well. Reflect on executive presence discussion questions to assess your own skills as well. Of course, it's possible to miss some of our own hidden strengths and weaknesses. As a next step, gain feedback from people you work with to better understand how others perceive you as well. Reflect on executive presence discussion questions to assess your own skills as well.

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