

# EXECUTIVE PRESENCE: MASTERING THE ART OF OPPORTUNITY



## EXECUTIVE PRESENCE SETS THE ALTITUDE OF YOUR CAREER

Many skilled professionals, despite considerable talent, drive, and accomplishments, end up **perplexed** when they are told they are **not ready** to advance.

After years of successfully piloting their career, suddenly their ascent inexplicably stalls. For many professionals, this can be quite **challenging**.

They are often told “you need to work on your **executive presence**.” When they ask for clarification, the answers are anything but helpful.

### VAGUE AND USELESS

You: What exactly do you mean?

Boss: You know, your gravitas.

You: What is that?

Boss: You know, gravitas.

### SPECIFIC AND IRRELEVANT

You: How do I do that?

Boss: You need to dress two levels up.

You: So...if I dress better, I'll be promoted?

Boss: Well...not exactly.

### ABSURD AND INSULTING

You: Why do you say that?

Boss: People don't like the way you talk to them.

You: I talk like you talk.

Boss: True, but you're a

woman. Elocution lessons!

What would happen if the air traffic controller failed to communicate clearly with the pilot of your plane? The shocking truth is...

**Most managers can't clearly articulate what you need to do.**



The reason your upward climb stalls and why you are told you need more executive presence are one and the same — people don't have confidence in your ability to lead.



**Executive Presence is the ability to inspire confidence that you can lead well in a given situation.**

## 6 DEGREES OF EXECUTIVE PRESENCE



It's not what you do (how you speak, act, or dress), it's your **state of being** (how you are) that matters.

### PROACTIVE

Acting in anticipation of future problems, needs or changes

### RESOLUTE

Marked by firm determination

### EQUANIMITY

Evenness of mind especially under stress

### STILLNESS

Freedom from storm or disturbance

### ENGAGED

To enter into contest or conflict with

### CONFIDENCE

Purity of action produced by a mind free of doubt \*

## PILOT ERROR



Misunderstanding how executive presence works makes you are **less likely** to successfully generate it.

### NOT POSSESSED

Exists between you and the perceiver.  
Opinions may differ.

### NOT UNIVERSAL

Doesn't always transfer between contexts.  
Results may vary.

### NOT OBJECTIVE

Based on perception, not ability or merit.  
Views may change.

\* *The Confidence Code*, by Katty Kay & Claire Shipman



## IMPLICIT LEADERSHIP THEORY (THE TOM BRADY PROBLEM)

Close your eyes. Imagine a powerful, dynamic, Fortune 500 CEO. How do they look, sound, and move? If you don't look like them, you have a problem. Add to this, what if most people don't picture someone who looks like you?

- How might this affect how you are treated?
- How might this affect how your actions are perceived?
- How might this impact your access to opportunities?

## ABCs FOR THOSE WHO DON'T LOOK LIKE TOM BRADY



### **ALLIES** — 25% support is a tipping point

Just because you start out being perceived by most as an anomaly, it need not stay that way. Support for new social norms and opinions flips at 25% percent.<sup>1</sup>



### **BRAVO!** — Choose your identity

To combat stereotype threat (when worry about negative stereotypes hurts your performance), choose your identity and reveal your choice through your behavior.<sup>2</sup>



### **CODE OF AUTHENTICITY** — Connection powers authenticity

Authenticity + Connection = Authenticity as an ASSET

Authenticity + Disconnection = Authenticity as a LIABILITY

1. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-25-revolution-how-big-does-a-minority-have-to-be-to-reshape-society/>

2. "Every action says, this is who I Am." Jonathan Rowson - Scottish Chess grandmaster