

CORPORATE CLASS INC.

Image and Etiquette

3 Killer Ways to Build Your Executive Presence

Being a highly productive employee, a great communicator, or even a leader of influence is just not enough if you want to keep moving to the top rungs of the corporate ladder. No matter what position you're currently in, you need [executive presence](#) to advance. The higher up you go, the more executive presence you need.

Executive presence is not just one particular trait or quality but a personal distinctiveness that leaves a strong, long-lasting impression, making people want to listen to you and, more importantly, follow you.

Three great ways to develop executive presence are by identifying your brand, stepping out of your comfort zone, and recruiting influential advocates.

Build a Strong Positive Brand

[Building your brand](#) helps you position yourself for greater visibility in front of your peers and senior management. Branding helps you stand apart from the competition and get noticed. Your aim is to project yourself as being the absolute "best" at what you do. Build your brand by identifying what you're good at and the qualities that set you apart from the rest. This will help you establish "expert" status and prove your worth to your employer.

Start by asking yourself: what are my top skills and talents that I can provide to the organization? Which issues can I confidently handle at board meetings? What tasks do I find relatively easy to do or excel at? These might be your [branding](#) characteristics. If you had one sentence to describe yourself, what would it be?

Branding makes you a valuable asset in your organization. For example, one of my clients, a technical engineer, found that he had the unique ability to simplify technical jargon in understandable terms and present it to top management. His peers, although equally skilled, didn't have the aptitude for presenting complex issues in a simple way. He built his brand around this unique skill and gained greater visibility, harvested more opportunities, and improved his executive presence.

Risk-taking is Not Just for Leaders

are beyond what they're comfortable doing can actually downsize-proof their careers by gaining more visibility and having a significant impact on their company's bottom line. If you're anxious about the possibility of taking a risk, start small. The first step you can take is to take on added responsibilities and do more than what your job description entails. This will help you stand out in front of senior executives as someone who is willing to take the initiative and go the extra mile. Think outside the box and provide a creative perspective to solve a problem or tackle a situation.

A good example is Ian Clarke, who founded FreeNet before he turned 25. In the book *Geeks and Geezers* he states, "I always place myself in a situation that I'm not quite equipped to deal with, but I learn ... That's how I do it ... I buy one shoe size bigger than I actually need and grow into it."

When you take a risk, you build executive presence by getting others to respect you. As a result, you receive high-profile assignments, and your capabilities are valued no matter what level you're at in your company.

Garner Influence and Support

Having influence is critical to success. [Building strategic relationships](#) with people of influence and getting people to advocate for you and support you are critical elements in building executive presence and rising in the ranks. Communicate to your boss and peers that you are open for feedback and encourage them to let you know if you've excelled at a particular task. Contact executives in upper management and ask them if you can contact them periodically to share your progress. Seek meeting opportunities with executives you admire, especially those who project a strong executive presence.

Gaining more recognition in your organization is your responsibility. If you don't indulge in self-promotion and make influential contacts, you will most likely be overshadowed by those that do. Executive presence will allow you to influence positively, drive change, and create innovative solutions. Are you ready to create massive change within your organization? Executive presence makes it possible.

Bio:



JOEL GARFINKLE is recognized as one of the top 50 coaches in the U.S., having worked with many of the world's leading companies, including Oracle, Google, Amazon, Deloitte, Ritz-Carlton, Gap, and Starbucks. He is the author of 7 books, including [Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level](#). View his books and FREE articles at [Garfinkle Executive Coaching](#). Subscribe to his [Executive Coaching Newsletter](#) and receive the FREE e-book, *40 Proven Strategies to Get Promoted Now!*